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Inter-Arab Affairs

Arab Interior Ministers Council Concludes Meeting

Communique Issued

LD0501190996 Riyadh SPA in Arabic 1620 GMT 5 Jan 95

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Tunis, 14 Dec (SPA) — The Arab Interior Ministers Council, at the end of its meetings today, issued the following statement:

The 13th Session of Arab Interior Ministers held in Tunis on 4 and 5 January 1996 took place in a friendly and cooperative atmosphere.

The working sessions were marked by positive statements and objective discussions on the agenda topics. A host of resolutions were reached aimed at consolidating the progress of joint Arab security work and consolidating its bases and mainstays.

In the first of its resolutions, the council adopted the secretary general's report and he was thanked for the efforts made to implement the general secretariat's agenda in 1995 and for following up and implementing the resolutions from the 12th session. [passage omitted]

The council also adopted on submission by the Saudi interior minister, honorary chairman of the Arab Interior Ministers Council, and the chairman of the executive committee of the Arab Center for Security Studies and Training, His Royal Highness Prince Nayif Bin Abd al-Aziz's report on the center's work during 1995. [passage omitted]

The report showed that the center achieved a host of important scientific security projects with the aim of improving the competence of those who work in the Arab security bodies. It also aimed at improving the bodies and boosting their competence through: research and study; seminars and scientific meetings held; conferences, training sessions, and exhibitions organized by the center; master degree programs and advanced security specializations put into effect by the higher institute for security sciences; and in effective participation in several Arab and international seminars and meetings related to the center's specializations and activities.

The council reviewed the third annual report concerning the implementation of the Second Arab Security Plan and decided to endorse it expressing, in the meantime, its appreciation for the efforts of the council's general secretariat and the Arab Institute for Security Studies and Training in implementing the program for that plan. [passage omitted]

The number of recommendations endorsed by the esteemed council were 160, all of which were considered as a resolution in itself which means that the general secretariat would follow up its implementation and report to the council on what has been achieved.

The resolutions included the adoption of two important drafts in the field of joint Arab security action. The first draft concerns: "An Ideal Bilateral Arab Agreement in the Field of Civil Protection," to provide the guidelines for any two [Arab] countries which desire to establish permanent and fruitful cooperation in the field of civil protection, namely, to face up to all kinds of perils and threats that might result from natural or technological disasters. [passage omitted]

The second draft concerns: "An Arab Information Strategy for Security Awareness and Crime Prevention," which aims at reinforcing the bonds of cooperation between the security and other concerned organs with the aim of fortifying Arab society with religious, ethical, and educational values against crime in a way that would immunize the society against wrongdoing and deviation and would fortify it against the influence of suspicious ideological trends and deviant patterns of behavior coming from abroad.

The strategy has defined the general framework everyone should abide by in respect of the dissemination of crime news and the treatment of security matters in order to avoid the publication or broadcasting of any item of news that would disturb the calm of security and stir sedition and conflict between members of the society.

In clause eight of the agenda, the esteemed council adopted the draft codes of conduct on combating terrorism for the member states of the Arab Interior Ministers Council.

The member states affirmed their pledge not to carry out, start, or participate in any form organizing terrorist action and to prevent their territories from becoming an arena for the planning or execution of such acts.

They pledged to tighten the noose on terrorist elements and prevent their infiltration across their borders and their residence in their territories.

It is also forbidden for any member state to welcome, shelter, train, arm, or finance terrorist and sabotage elements.

The Arab states unanimously agreed on the importance and need for offering mutual assistance in the spheres of searching for and arresting fugitives who have been charged with or convicted of crimes of terrorism.

Furthermore, the code of conduct [on combating terrorism] urged the member states to coordinate control operations of the borders and outlets between them to prevent the transfer and use of weapons, ammunition, and explosives for unlawful purposes.

Regarding Clause B on the problem of material leftovers from wars and ways of dealing with them, the esteemed council urged the competent regional and international organizations and bodies to offer the required support to curb the dangers from the material leftovers from wars to people and property in the Arab homeland. [passage omitted]

Finally, the council decided to address a message of thanks and appreciation to Tunisian President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali for the great hospitality prevailing during the council's session which contributed towards ensuring its success and the achievement of its aims.

Syrian Delegate on 'Terrorism', 'Strugglers'

JN0501214096 Damascus Syrian Arab Television Network in Arabic 1830 GMT 5 Jan 96

[Announcer-read report over video]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The Arab Interior Ministers Council concluded meetings of its 13th session in Tunis today by endorsing the annual report concerning the implementation of the Second Arab Security Plan and the second annual report concerning implementation of the second phased plan on the Arab strategy to combat the illegal use of drugs.

Minister of Interior Muhammad Harbah said that the success of the Arab security march achieved by the Arab Interior Ministers Council underlines the importance of Arab solidarity, consensus, common objective, and joint will.

Addressing the 13th Session of the Arab Interior Ministers Council, Dr. Harbah said: The Arab nation is one entity and security is a joint responsibility. He added that any imbalance in one place will surely lead to an imbalance in other places, noting that this meeting of Arab interior ministers is a landmark for dialogue characterized by support for joint Arab action in one of its most important fields.

In his speech, the minister of interior pointed out that the two projects dealing with an Arab strategy to combat terrorism and the bases on which member states should combat terrorism listed on the session's agenda acquire special and distinguished importance, especially since they come at a time when the Arab homeland and the Islamic world are facing challenges targeting Islam and what is possesses in terms of civilization, culture, and values. He added that these two projects represent an eloquent response to those who attempted to distort the image of Islam and to harm the Arabs and Muslims by falsely stigmatizing them with terrorism.

The minister said: The terrorists involved in terrorist acts against civilians are murderers and criminals, but those who are fighting against the occupation to liberate their territories are strugglers. Dr. Harbah added: It is a right and an honor for anyone who wants to liberate his land. He stressed that it is in everyone's interest to distinguish between the criminal terrorist and the national struggler. [passage omitted]

Palestinian Affairs

'Arafat Accuses Israel of Killing Yahya 'Ayyash

JN0701165596 Paris Radio Monte Carlo in Arabic 1600 GMT 7 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Israel, which fears reprisals in the wake of the assassination of Yahya 'Ayyash, announced a state of maximum alert in the ranks of security troops. It has closed the Palestinian territories and urged Israelis to observe maximum alert, especially in buses and public areas. The Israeli Army canceled the deployment of joint patrols with the Palestinian Police. Security precautions were also stepped up around Israeli embassies and legations abroad.

The new relevant development that emerged today is the accusation by Yasir 'Arafat that Israel killed Yahya 'Ayyash. More details are in the following report by Ghassan 'Abd-al-Khaliq:

[Begin 'Abd-al-Khaliq recording] Yasir 'Arafat, president of the Palestinian National Authority, reacted to rumors circulated in the aftermath of the killing of Yahya 'Ayyash, known as the engineer, by directly accusing Israel of carrying out this operation, which he described as a violation of the peace agreements between Israel and the PLO. 'Arafat added that there can be no peace other than the Palestinian peace. He went on to say: We are asking the other side, namely Israel, to comply with the agreements, instead of killing 'Ayyash on Palestinian territory in Gaza.

'Arafat was addressing thousands of Palestinians in Dura, from which the Israeli Army withdrew last month. It should be recalled that the Israeli Army withdrew from Dura, along with four other villages located near Hebron last month. The Israeli Army will remain deployed in several Hebron neighborhoods to protect 400 settlers who are living in the midst of 120,000 Palestinians.

'Arafat hoped that he will meet the Dura masses in Hebron soon. He added: I am meeting Hebron residents in Dura, just as I have met Jerusalemites in Bethlehem and Ramallah. We will pray at the Ibrahimi Mosque in Hebron and the al-Aqsa Mosque in occupied Jerusalem.

A handmade grenade went off in the holy city today. No casualties or damage were reported. The Israeli police did not rule out the possibility that this explosion could be an attempt to avenge the death of engineer Yahya 'Ayyash. [end recording]

'Highly Concerned' About Killing's Impact

TA0701111496 Tel Aviv MA'ARIV in Hebrew 7 Jan 96 p 6

[Report by Shefi Gabay, Hanan Schlein, and Eli Bohadana]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] "The Palestinian Authority [PA] leader was very embarrassed by the assassination of archterrorist Yahya 'Ayyash. 'Arafat is highly concerned that it will undermine the PA's relations with Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] and the Islamic Jihad who, he fears, will attempt to avenge the death by harming him," a senior PA official has told MA'ARIV.

On Friday night 'Arafat convened PA members, advisers, and police commanders for an emergency session.

He voiced a serious apprehension about the results of the PA presidency and council elections, scheduled for 20 January, as well as the prospect of Hamas retaliating against Israelis — the latter being highly likely to adversely affect PA-Israel relations. [passage omitted]

Al-Husayni on 'Ayyash, Israeli-U.S. Defense Alliance

NC0801201196 Cairo Arab Republic of Egypt Radio Network in Arabic 1845 GMT 8 Jan 96

[Telephone interview with Faysal al-Husayni, PA official in charge of the Jerusalem file, in Jerusalem, by unidentified correspondent in Cairo; date not given—recorded]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [passage omitted] [Correspondent] It was announced a short time ago that a joint U.S.-Israeli committee has been formed to discuss a defense alliance between the two countries. What is your comment?

[Al-Husayni] We ask once again: a defense alliance against whom? The principal power in this region that commits aggression is Israel. U.S. interests in the Gulf states and the other Arab countries are ensured to a large extent. We are trying to open a new page with Israel. But this is the Israeli mentality, which is now invading the U.S. mentality, too. This Israeli mentality does not try to change and continues to deal with us not as partners in the peace process but as enemies. I believe that such agreements are destructive for the peace process and ultimately for Israel itself.

[Correspondent] What are the consequences of the assassination of 'Ayyash in Gaza two days ago for the situation in the Palestinian areas and the elections?

[Al-Husayni] It is primarily a blow to the credibility of the peace process and of Israel as a partner in this process. It is consequently also a blow to our credibility. Hence, the climate in the region is not comfortable for us. Yes, everyone has pointed the finger at Israel. Everyone has exposed this ploy. This operation is having bad consequences and casting shadows on the future of the peace process.

[Correspondent] How can the Palestinian Authority [PA] contain the consequences of the assassination?

[Al-Husayni] Through more dialogue, stronger national unity, and more cohesiveness and by not allowing the Israeli side to create problems for us and to act in ways that allow it to sneak away unscathed while leaving us quarreling among ourselves. This is what we are seeking and what we have succeeded in doing so far.

[Correspondent] A French paper said today that the Israeli intelligence service wanted to make up for its failure when Rabin was assassinated.

[Al-Husayni] What I can say is that the Israeli intelligence service has acted in an unbalanced way. It carried out this operation a long time after the cessation of armed operations against Israel. This cessation came as a result of conviction and not out of fear of Israel. This operation might initially satisfy some people but it will open hell's doors for Israel.

[Correspondent] Is this service operating without the knowledge of Israel's responsible authorities?

[Al-Husayni] We are convinced that there are secret groups within the Israeli army, the Israeli entity, and the Israeli authority that are operating against the peace process. We also feel that the Israeli Government is still lax and lenient, if not involved.

Shin Bet Role Reportedly Revealed in 'Ayyash Case

TA0901174396 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1605 GMT 9 Jan 96

[Report by Yoni Ben-Menahem]

[FBIS Translated Text] Palestinian Security Service officials say several persons in the Gaza Strip who helped Israel kill Yahya 'Ayyash have been arrested, and their interrogation revealed that the outgoing head of the Shin Bet personally commanded 'Ayyash's elimination from a special headquarters set up in one of the settlements in the northern Gaza Strip. The officials believe that Kamal Hammad, the Gazan building contractor who gave the booby-trapped telephone to Yahya 'Ayyash, is in Israel. The Palestinian Authority will soon submit to Israel an official request for Hammad's extradition.

According to the officials, Hammad recently went bankrupt and ran into financial difficulties due to a large building project in Gaza's al-Nasir neighborhood. They claim that Hammad received the plot of land on which he was building from the Civil Administration in Gaza when Israel still ruled the area, and that about a month ago he sent his Syrian-born second wife to the United States, where his son lives.

A senior Palestinian Police officer said the Palestinian Security Service regularly updates Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] on the progress in the affair's investigation. He added that special measures have been taken to protect the lives of dignitaries and leaders of the Islamic organizations in the Gaza Strip.

'Arafat's wife Suha yesterday called on the Hamas leaders and on 'Ayyash's father at Filastin Mosque to offer her condolences over the terrorist's death.

Security Detains 5 Suspects in 'Ayyash Murder

TA0701092096 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0800 GMT 7 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Palestinian security services in the Gaza Strip detained five persons suspected of involvement in Yahya 'Ayyash's elimination. Three of the five are residents of the southern part of the Gaza Strip.

Sources in the Palestinian commission of inquiry into the affair told our correspondent Yoni Ben-Menahem that 'Ayyash was eliminated while using a cellular phone to inquire about his father's health. The sources told our correspondent that 'Ayyash was hiding in Bayt Lahiyah under the alias of Abu-Ahmad, and that nobody except for the owner of the house in which he was hiding knew his real identity.

Arrest Warrant Issued for Kamal Hammad

JN0901151096 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1200 GMT 9 Jan 96

[Report by 'Adil al-Za'nun in the Gaza Strip]

[FBIS Translated Text] Khalid al-Qidrah, general prosecutor in the National Authority, said the investigation into the assassination of Yahya 'Ayyash, who was killed in Bayt Lahiyah last Friday, has reached an advanced stage.

The Palestinian police and security forces continue their investigations to arrest 'Ayyash's murderers and to find the persons who planned the assassination. Al-Qidrah said the National Authority has some suspects, but he did not give their names or say where they reside. He also did not reveal how many suspects there are. Al-Qidrah said the results will be announced once the investigation is completed.

Al-Qidrah said he issued an arrest warrant for Kamal Hammad, noting that the warrant was distributed to all police departments, security agencies, and border crossings.

Kamal Hammad is the person who delivered the booby-trapped mobile phone by which 'Ayyash was assassinated. This was revealed by Usamah Hammad, 'Ayyash's friend and owner of the house in which 'Ayyash was staying when the assassination took place.

Al-Qidarah said legal measures will be taken against any person involved in the assassination. He added that the Israeli side planned and carried out the operation, with the help of other people. This is no secret and the Israeli side admitted it.

Hammad Reportedly Flees to U.S.

TA0701164296 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 1500 GMT 7 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Excerpt] [passage omitted] Usamah Hammad, whose father owns the house in which Yahya 'Ayyash died, has been released after questioning by the Palestinian security services. He said that the phone was handed to 'Ayyash by his uncle, Kamal Hammad, who fled on the same day to the United Sates. His uncle disconnected the regular telephone lines in the house so that 'Ayyash would be forced to use the booby-trapped instrument, he said. When 'Ayyash's father called, the uncle answered and handed the phone to the terrorist, who managed to utter only a few sentences before it blew up in his hands.

Al-Zahhar Denies Hammad's Involvement

TA0701102596 Jerusalem AL-QUDS in Arabic 7 Jan 96 p 3

[Report by special AL-QUDS correspondent]

[FBIS Translated Text] Gaza — Dr. Mahmud al-Zahhar, Hamas' [Islamic Resistance Movement] official spokesman, has denied Israel's allegations against Usamah Hammad and categorically refuted reports disseminated by the Israeli news media.

He said that Usamah Hammad is in Gaza, that he has not left the city, that he has not been accused by any quarter, and that he is not suspected whatsoever in connection with the martyrdom of the late Yahya 'Ayyash.

Dr. al-Zahhar affirmed that Usamah is a son of Hamas, is trusted by it, and that Israel is seeking to deflect the issue into a direction which harms honorable people in order to cover up the real criminals.

Official Says No PA Involvement in 'Ayyash Case

TA0701072696 Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew 0500 GMT 7 Jan 96

[Telephone interview with Rashid Abu-Shibak, deputy head of the Palestinian security Services by Mikha Friedman and Ya'el Qovetz in the Gaza Strip — live]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Friedman] Is it absolutely clear to you and to the Palestinian Authority [PA] that Israel is responsible for the elimination of Yahya 'Ayyash?

[Abu-Shibak] Yes, this is certainly clear.

[Friedman] How can you say this for sure?

[Abu-Shibak] I think that from the Israeli media reports it is absolutely clear the Israelis planned this operation.

[Friedman] Were you aware of the fact that Israel has been relentlessly pursuing this man for a long time?

[Abu-Shibak] Yes, the Israelis have been after him for the last two years.

[Friedman] Did Israel ask for the cooperation of the Palestinian security services in this operation?

[Abu-Shibak] No.

[Qovetz] The Israeli media reported you are searching for the son of the owner of the house in which 'Ayyash resided.

[Abu-Shibak] No, this is unsubstantiated.

[Friedman] Did you know where 'Ayyash was hiding?

[Abu-Shibak] Absolutely not.

[Friedman] Had you known, what would you have done — would you detain him or kill him? After all, this man was dangerous not only for Israelis, but for you as well.

[Abu-Shibak] Were it necessary we would have detained him, but now there is no point in talking about such a possibility.

[Friedman] Did you search for him during the many months in which he hid in the Gaza Strip?

[Abu-Shibak] Occasionally we searched for him. What was done, however, was very dangerous.

[Friedman] There were reports in Israel that 'Ayyash was prepared to carry out a large-scale attack in Israel by sending out a suicide terrorist.

[Abu-Shibak] No, this is totally untrue. The Israelis know that because of our understanding with Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement], over the last six or seven months there have been no attacks in Israel.

[Friedman] However, did you have any control over this ruthless individual?

[Abu-Shibak] All Hamas members....[pauses] Recently we started to close them down.

[Friedman] Following 'Ayyash's elimination, do you believe that revenge attacks will be carried out against Israel?

[Abu-Shibak] In my opinion everything is possible now.

[Friedman] Does this mean that the PA-Hamas agreement is no longer valid?

[Abu-Shibak] Now we cannot pressure Hamas too much. I think that this incident is terrible.

[Friedman] Does this mean that the Israeli assessment about attacks is realistic? Do you believe attacks will be carried out?

[Abu-Shibak] I hope the Hamas people have learned the lesson and the situation does not become more complicated.

[Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew at 0600 GMT on 7 January adds: "Yasir 'Arafat has established a commission of inquiry to investigate the circumstances surrounding Yahya 'Ayyash's death. Sources in the commission told our correspondent Yoni Ben-Menahem that 'Ayyash's friend Usamah Hamad had nothing to do with the booby- trapping of the cellular phone. The investigation now focuses on the question of who booby-trapped the phone and where it was done."]

Hamas Issues Statement on 'Ayyash Killing

JN0501194196 (Clandestine) Al-Quds Palestinian Arab Radio in Arabic 1755 GMT 5 Jan 96

[Statement by Hamas on 5 January—read by announcer]

[FBIS Translated Text] The Islamic Resistance Movement, Hamas, proudly announces to our Palestinian masses the death of its martyr hero, struggler leader Yahya 'Ayyash, leader of the martyrs groups in the Martyr 'Izz al-Din al-Qassam Battalions. Yahya 'Ayyash was assassinated by the treacherous Zionist organs in collusion with the feeble self-rule authority and the network of agents planted by the occupation on our Palestinian land to wreak havoc under the auspices of the authority which has failed to protect the sons of the Palestinian people, even in the areas in which it presumes it rules. All this takes place while its leaders brag about their success in preventing the Palestinian resistance heroes from carrying out their commando attacks against the usurper occupiers.

Our valiant Palestinian people: Your militant movement, Hamas, while bringing you glad tidings that its leader hero Yahya 'Ayyash has ascended to heaven, congratulates its hero leader on winning the honor of martyrdom for the sake of God, and recalls the long series of sacrifices which were given as cheap offerings for the sake of God and the freedom of the homeland and the people.

Shaykh 'Izz al-Din al-Qassam and his righteous companions and the sons of the valiant 'Izz al-Din al-Qassam Battalions and the strugglers and martyrs from our people who followed them on the road to jihad up to Yahya 'Ayyash are only milestones in the blessed and ongoing march of jihad that will not be harmed by those who deserted it or those who conspired against it. However, 'Ayyash's assassination at a time the hired trumpets brag about the advent of the so-called peace makes one wonder what kind of peace is this that the self-rule authority has succeeded in offering to our people after having forsaken everything?

While the Hamas Movement affirms to our people that our struggle will only be with the Zionist entity, which stands behind this treacherous crime, it points to the authority as being the breach the Zionist entity has opened in the wall of the steadfast people and the Trojan horse through which the Zionists' fingers infiltrate to strike at a new place every day.

Our Palestinian people, the assassination of martyr hero Yahya 'Ayyash, who has kept the Zionist entity and its organs of treachery on their toes for more than five years, only confirms that the battle continues. If Yahya was martyred, then all the Palestinian people are like Yahya, and all the Hamas sons are like Yahya. And soon will the unjust assailants know what vicissitudes their affairs will take. [Koranic verse]

Martyrdom has been Yahya's long-pursued wish. It is the hope pursued by Hamas' heroes every hour. We tell the 'Arafatist authority, which has made extinguishing the firebrand of jihad its primary concern, that you have failed to curb your Zionist partners' lust for blood. They have violated the security of the Palestinian people inside the self-rule areas. Therefore, we tell you that you are too weak to halt jihad even inside the areas in which you have posted yourselves as guards for the Zionists.

The Hamas Movement stresses to the Palestinian people, who are being subjected to the ugliest campaign of disinformation in their modern history, that the martyrdom of leader Yahya 'Ayyash is part of his battle against the Zionist entity, which, having usurped our people's land, now seeks to uproot them. The Hamas Movement vows before God that it will continue its jihad and resistance program. Let the invaders and their henchmen await the movement's response to the Zionist crime. Leader martyr Yahya 'Ayyash's assassination came only two weeks before the feeble self-rule elections, which the Zionists and the feeble authority want as a means to legalize their feeble agreements.

The Hamas Movement calls on the Palestinian people on this occasion to support the resistance option and reject the feeble agreements with all their repercussions, including the elections farce. The people who gave birth to 'Izz-al-Din al-Qassam, 'Abd-al- Qadir al-Husayni, Yasir al-Namruti, 'Imad 'Aql, Kamal Kuhayl, Tariq Dukhkhan, Khalid Akram, and leader, mentor, and symbol Yahya 'Ayyash are always capable of giving birth to more leaders and symbols of jihad and struggle. The march of jihad toward the liberation of our land and holy places will continue and escalate. It will be further enkindled by the blood of our martyrs, which will turn it into a revolution and a volcano that will set ablaze the ground under the feet of the occupying invaders.

God is great. Victory belongs to our mujahid people.

[Signed] The Islamic Resistance Movement, Hamas. Palestine. Friday, 5 January 1996.

Hamas' Ghawshah Interviewed on 'Ayyash Killing

NC0601192596 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Arabic 1745 GMT 6 Jan 96

[Interview with Ibrahim Ghawshah, Hamas official spokesman, by 'Isam Hasan; place and date not given; from the "News and Reports" program—recorded]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Hasan] Mr. Ghawshah, reports speak of the martyrdom of hero and struggler Yahya 'Ayyash. The Palestinian Authority [PA] wants to give the impression that martyr 'Ayyash's death was the result of the explosion of his mobile telephone set. To your knowledge, what is the truth?

[Ghawshah] In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful. First of all, we want to announce to the Arab and Islamic nation and to the Palestinian people the martyrdom of hero and struggler Yahya 'Ayyash by criminal assassination in Gaza yesterday. We emphasize that this martyr, who has been chased by the Israeli intelligence for a long time, has done his duty before God, his people, and his homeland and that those who carried out this crime must be forced to pay the price that must be paid. As for the PA, it is clear that it has stalled, muffled, delayed, and imposed a blackout on news about this incident. Until this moment, no official statement has been made by any known figure from this authority about the circumstances of this serious incident. Reports about the incident came from security sources that declined to be identified. The first report in the media about the matter came from the Zionist side. Several Zionist figures have commented on hero Yahya 'Ayyash's martyrdom. We could say that the circumstances of Yahya 'Ayyash have not been fully unraveled. Instead, a report was leaked saying that the martyrdom resulted from a rigged mobile telephone set.

[Hasan] Mr. Ghawshah; the arrogant media seem to suggest and give the impression that 'Ayyash's martyrdom will be the end of the Palestinian jihad action by Hamas. The media are trying to say that 'Ayyash was the first and last military brain. What is your assessment of this intensive media campaign about this point in particular?

[Ghawshah] It is clear that this tendency by the media is meant to show that the Zionist enemy and its intelligence have made a great accomplishment, in a bid to regain their stature before the Zionist and world public opinion. They also want to suggest that the mastermind has been eliminated. However, we as Muslims emphasize that Yahya 'Ayyash's martyrdom can never stop the resistance of the Zionist occupation, because this resistance is both a principled and national resistance. It will stop only after the Zionist occupation of the Palestinian territories have been eliminated. Furthermore, recent martyrdom operations have proved that martyr Yahya 'Ayyash had disciples who possess his qualifications and skill to deal fatal blows to the Zionist occupation.

[Hasan] Thank you Mr. Ghawshah for giving us this opportunity.

[Ghawshah] Thank you and good luck.

Al-Faluji: Israel To Pay 'High Price' for Killing

JN0601163496 Paris Radio Monte Carlo in Arabic 1600 GMT 6 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Islamic Resistance Movement, Hamas, announced that it will soon avenge the killing of Yahya 'Ayyash. 'Imad al-Faluji, one of the Hamas leaders, says that Israel will pay a high price. 'Imad al-Faluji was answering questions by Salah Salamah. Al-Faluji first gave his opinion as to who is responsible for the assassination:

[Begin recording] [al-Faluji] I believe the only side behind this assassination is Israeli intelligence. The Israeli security apparatus bears full responsibility for this filthy operation.

[Salamah] Do you have material evidence to prove this charge?

[Al-Faluji] Yes, I believe that Israel has not denied responsibility for this operation in the first place. Moreover, the first to announce the assassination was Israel.

[Salamah] In a statement in Gaza today, Hamas accused the Palestinian National Authority of connivance in 'Ayyash's killing. What is the evidence on which Hamas based this charge?

[Al-Faluji] I know nothing about this statement. However, I assert that the only side behind this operation is Israel. I believe that the relationship between Hamas and the Palestinian Authority will not be greatly affected by this operation. However, the Authority must realize that Israel will have to pay a high price for carrying out this operation. I do not think that Hamas will stand idly by in view of this terrible deed. Therefore, all sides must know that Israel started the battle, and that it wants to undermine all forms of stability in the region. I do not know how Hamas will retaliate but I know very well that Israel will pay a high price for this operation. [end recording]

Hamas Leader Vows Revenge for Assassination

TA0901181196 Ramallah AL-AYYAM in Arabic 7 Jan 96 p 3

[Interview with Shaykh Ahmad Bahr, a Hamas leader in the Gaza Strip, by 'Abd-al-Ra'uf Arna'ut; place and date not given]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Arna'ut] In your opinion, why did Israel carry out the assassination at this time?

[Bahr] By its nature, Israel causes problems and trouble. It considered martyr 'Ayyash to be the first on its most wanted list. Therefore, it was not inconceivable that Israel would carry out this cowardly act at any moment to assassinate Yahya 'Ayyash or others. On the whole, Israel is interested in causing trouble everywhere.

[Arna'ut] What are your impressions from the Palestinian street after this operation?

[Bahr] There is general resentment in the Palestinian street. Anyone who witnessed today's funeral ceremony, in which more than 300,000 people participated, can realize the extent of this resentment.

The funeral ceremony was attended by all Palestinian factions and the Palestinian police whom we thank for both participating in and organizing the ceremony.

Moreover, many leaders and soldiers attended the funeral.

In short, today's funeral represented the unity of the Palestinian people with all their forces — the Palestinian Authority [PA], people, and factions.

This unity is a response to the Israeli Mosad, which undertook the assassination and also sought to trigger discord among the sons of one people.

[Arna'ut] In that case, do you accuse the Israeli Mosad of undertaking this operation?

[Bahr] The Israeli Mosad's fingerprints in this operation are very obvious. Israel was the first to announce it.

[Arna'ut] Do you believe that this operation will have an impact on relations between Hamas (Islamic Resistance Movement) and the National Authority?

[Bahr] We hope that this event will not have any impact on relations between Hamas and the PA. This is because Israel is very interested in straining relations between the two sides, especially at this time.

[Arna'ut] But Hamas today distributed a statement in which it pledged to avenge the assassination of martyr 'Ayyash. Naturally, the PA will not allow perpetrators to operate from its territory so that it would not to be described as violating the agreement with Israel?

[Bahr] Hamas has the right to take revenge for martyr 'Ayyash and others, because he was assassinated by the Israeli Mosad in a place whose security is the PA's responsibility. Therefore, the hands and hearts of all the Palestinian people must be joined to avenge the martyr 'Ayyash.

[Arna'ut] The PA formed a special committee to investigate the circumstances of the assassination. Will Hamas cooperate with this committee or will it form its own special committee?

[Bahr] This depends on devoted people and decision-makers.

[Arna'ut] What do you mean by this?

[Bahr] I mean that there are organs in Hamas that will follow up on this matter. I have no connection with these organs. There are secret and specialized organs whose task it is to follow up on such matters.

Qaddumi Condemns Israel for 'Ayyash Assassination

NC0701143496 Cairo MENA in English 1405 GMT 7 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] TUNIS, JAN 7 (MENA)—Head of the PLO Political Department Faruq Qaddumi, condemned Israel's assassination of Yahya 'Ayyash, military official of Palestinian Hamas [Islamic Resistance] Movement.

In a statement distributed today by the PLO Political Department here, Qaddumi said that by assassinating 'Ayyash, Israel pursues its use of terrorism in implementing its political aims, and peace for it is still far away.

By such acts, Israel closes the door before peace opportunities as it still aspires to be the distinguished state in the Middle East, through its use of violence in disregard of the peace march and signed agreements, he said. The Israeli Government's admission of assassinating a Palestinian national inside self-rule area, stresses its denial of Palestinian sovereignty over this part of Palestine from which it has withdrawn, and also shows its disrespect of international treaties and documents, Qaddumi added.

Shallah Promises 'Painful' Jihad Response

MM0801142396 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 7 Jan 96 p 5

[Unattributed report: "Shallah Tells AL-HAYAH: Islamic Jihad Will Respond to 'Ayyash's Assassination"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Damascus, AL-HAYAH — Dr. Ramadan 'Abdallah Shallah, the Islamic Jihad Movement's leader, has stressed that the movement's response to Engineer Yahya 'Ayyash's assassination "for which the Self-Rule Authority is partly responsible" will be "painful and will turn (the Israelis') joy into sorrow," adding that participation in the Self-Rule Authority's elections is "participation in 'Ayyash's killing and that of all martyrs...and confers legitimacy on the enemy's crimes." The Damascus-based opposition left-wing groups described 'Ayyash as "a great militant leader who played a major part in the struggle against the enemy," and promised all martyrs "to continue the struggle until the attainment of the goals for which they gave their lives."

In an interview with AL-HAYAH, Shallah said that 'Ayyash's assassination is "a blow to the militant Islamic movement in Palestine, aimed at eliminating the jihad resistance and imposing surrender agreements," and stressed that Islamic Jihad will respond to "the Zionist enemy's crimes, namely the assassinations of Mahmud al-Khawaja (one of the movement's leaders in Gaza), Abu-Ibrahim (Fathi al-Shaqaqi), and finally 'Ayyash. We will continue to defend the march of Islam and jihad in Palestine." He pointed out, however, that "the nature of the response will depend on the mujahidin's circumstances and their capabilities in the field." He added: "It will be a painful response for the enemy, turning joy and happiness into grief and sorrow." Dr. Shallah, who became secretary general following al-Shaqaqi's assassination on 26 October 1995, did not rule out being targeted by Israeli intelligence "since we expect the worst from the enemy, and it is a battle between us and them. However, threats of assassination or elimination do not scare us, because we are aware of the dangers on our path." The leader of the Islamic Jihad Movement, which has rejected participation in the Self-Rule assembly elections, said that "to participate in the election battle in any way is to participate in the assassination of 'Ayyash and all the self-rule area's martyrs, following the phase of insignificant peace. It is this phony peace which has paved the way for the assassinations."

'Tens of Thousands' Attend 'Ayyash Funeral

JN0601150796 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1210 GMT 6 Jan 96

[Report by 'Adil al-Za'nun in Gaza; from the "Today's Events" program—live]

[FBIS Translated Text] Tens of thousands of Palestinians escorted the body of martyr Yahya 'Ayyash to his final resting place. It should be recalled that 'Ayyash was assassinated by a rigged mobile telephone set in Bayt Lahiyah in the northern Gaza Strip yesterday.

The grand procession of the funeral kicked off from the Palestine Mosque in Gaza after noon prayers today. The procession passed through the al-Nasr and al-Wahdah streets. It then went through 'Umar al-Mukhtar street in the midst of the city heading for the Martyrs Cemetery in the eastern part of the al-Shuja'iyah neighborhood in Gaza, where the body of the martyr is being laid to rest right now.

The huge Palestinian crowds from all parts of the Gaza Strip hold the Israeli occupation authorities fully responsible for the assassination of martyr 'Ayyash. In their nationalist shouts during the funeral procession, the masses condemned the assassination as a heinous crime. The masses taking part in the funeral raised Palestinian flags, black banners, and placards urging a closure of ranks to confront the plots hatched by enemies against the Palestinian people.

The citizens shouted: With our souls and blood, we will redeem you, o martyr. They expressed their anger and indignation over this cowardly act.

Several officials, commanders, and nationalist and Islamic figures from all parts of the Gaza Strip took part in the funeral of martyr 'Ayyash. The parents of martyr 'Ayyash, who came from the town of Rafat in the West Bank to Gaza today to pay their last respects to their martyred son 'Ayyash, were in attendance.

All nationalist and Islamic forces in the Gaza Strip issued statements holding the Israeli occupation authorities responsible for the incident. They stressed the need to promote national unity.

Arab-Israeli Talks

Israel-Syria 'Draft Peace Treaty' Detailed

TA0901192196 Jerusalem AL-MANAR in Arabic 8 Jan 96 pp 1, 19

[FBIS Translated Text] The draft peace treaty between Syria and Israel, prepared by Syrian and Israeli teams with the knowledge of the United States, consists of 12 articles. The preparation of this draft treaty took a long time, during which ideas were conveyed to the two sides. Moreover, there were exchanges of views, modifications, deletions, and additions. The U.S. secretary of state, together with a special State Department team, supervised the drafting of this treaty. He will personally present it to Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad and Israeli Prime Minister Shim'on Peres.

This draft agreement consists of 12 articles. If the two sides agree on it, it will be signed this year a few months before the Israeli elections. This is the aim of Peres, in order that this agreement may become a winning card in his hands during the election campaign. Damascus is aware of Peres' aim.

The articles of the peace agreement are as follows:

1. Israel acknowledges that the Golan Heights is part of Syria and declares its readiness to withdraw completely from it.

2. The Israeli withdrawal will begin immediately upon the signing of the treaty and will last eight months.

3. Damascus will recognize Israel, and the two sides will announce mutual diplomatic recognition.

4. Following mutual recognition, dismantling of settlements in the Golan will start and be concluded within six months.

5. Immediate normalization will take place between the two sides, and economic projects will be established between them with U.S. participation. The projects will be set up on the Golan.

6. Security arrangements, with U.S. supervision, will be implemented along the borders. Symbolic international forces will be allowed to deploy on the Syrian side of the border for two years. Sophisticated warning stations, supervised by the United States, will be set up.

7. Joint agreements will be reached on water and prisoners.

8. Israel undertakes to reach a peace treaty with Lebanon within six months after the resumption of talks between the two countries.

9. The United States will guarantee that war will not break out between Syria and Israel after Damascus and Tel Aviv announce an end to the state of war between them.

10. The United States pledges to aid the Syrian and Israeli economies.

11. Syria will promote a comprehensive Arab-Israeli reconciliation.

12. Syria will guarantee a state of tranquillity and stability on the northern Israeli borders until the signing of a peace treaty between Lebanon and Israel.

Diplomatic sources, who relayed the draft Syrian-Israeli agreement to AL-MANAR, pointed out that the signing of the agreement will take place in Washington and that the U.S. Administration will try to arrange a more expanded meeting on this occasion that will be attended by the leaders of Egypt, Syria, Israel, Jordan, and Palestine.

The same sources added that high-level meetings by Syrian and Israeli ministers will precede the signing of the agreement and that these meetings will be crowned by a meeting between President al- Asad and Israeli Prime Minister Shim'on Peres.

'Sources' Cite Points of Framework Agreement

TA1001063096 Ramallah AL-AYYAM in Arabic 7 Jan 96 pp 1, 18

[FBIS Translated Text] Washington, AL-AYYAM — Informed Arab diplomatic sources have said that the Israeli-Syrian rounds of negotiations near Washington have reached the last stop in the negotiations between ambassadors and experts and will shift to higher and more discreet levels. This is because the last round of talks succeeded in drawing up points for a framework agreement on which the Israeli and Syrian delegations agreed, despite some disparities and differences over the meaning of certain expressions and terms in the points of agreement. The same sources assert that the points of agreement will form the basis for U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher's moves during his upcoming visit to the region. The points are as follows:

— UN Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338 constitute a sound basis for a Syrian-Israeli agreement.

— Withdrawal from the Syrian Golan Heights to the 4 June 1967 borders on the basis of a termination of the state of war in the region, with all that this process entails.

— Previous Israeli agreements with Egypt, Jordan, and the PLO will be considered the principal landmarks on the road to reaching a comprehensive agreement in the region.

— The Syrian and Israeli sides will defer discussion of the issues in dispute until after the announcement on the attainment of a Syrian-Israeli peace framework, provided the following joint committees are set up to discuss those issues: a security committee, an economic committee, a topographic committee, a reparations committee, and a higher coordination committee.

— The Israeli side proposes that the talks be moved from Washington to a capital close to Damascus and Tel Aviv, such as Amman or Cairo, whereas the Syrian side proposes Nicosia or Rhodes.

The diplomatic sources add that a lengthy contact was held between the head of the Syrian delegation and Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar' during which the delegation head explained that he needed an official directive on whether to approve or reject the above points in order for U.S. Secretary of State Christopher to make a decision about his visit to the region in light of this answer. The delegation head obtained an initial Syrian agreement to announce a Syrian-Israeli peace framework following the upcoming al-Asad-Christopher meeting and the clarification of some points by the U.S. side.

It is worth noting that on the night of 6 January, Lebanese President Ilyas al-Hirawi received a call from his Syrian counterpart in which al-Asad assured al-Hirawi that the Israelis had noticeably changed their language and that he believed that the attainment of a framework agreement "on a Syrian-Israeli peace" was imminent. During his unpublicized call to al-Hirawi, al-Asad called for the formation of a political and technical Lebanese delegation to meet with Christopher during his upcoming visit to Damascus.

Syria's al-Mu'allim: Talks 'Serious, Useful'

JN0501201396 Damascus Syrian Arab Television Network in Arabic 1830 GMT 5 Jan 96

[Announcer-read report]

[FBIS Translated Text] The second round of talks between the Syrian and Israeli delegations with the participation of the United States was concluded today at 1900 Damascus local time. Walid al-Mu'allim, Syria's ambassador in Washington, described the talks that were concluded this evening as serious and useful.

In a telephone contact with the chief editor of the SYRIAN ARAB NEWS AGENCY from Damascus, al-Mu'allim said that each delegation presented a lengthy explanation of its position on the essential elements of peace. He noted that the talks dealt with many issues, chief of which is the Israeli withdrawal from the occupied Syrian Golan Heights to the 4 June 1967 line, ordinary ['adiyah] peace relations, security arrangements, and the implementation timetable.

Al-Mu'allim added: The talks also dealt with the broader framework, given that Syria is the key to a just and comprehensive peace in the region.

Commenting on the outcome of the talks, al-Mu'allim said: The results of the talks show that it is possible to achieve substantive progress on the main issues despite the existence of difficulties and gaps between the positions of the two sides on some basic elements of peace. He added that it can be said that the outcome of these talks will form the basis from which Secretary Christopher will proceed during his next tour of the region, which will take him to Syria and Israel as of 10 January.

On the significance of Secretary Christopher's attendance of part of today's talks, al-Mu'allim said: Secretary Christopher's participation is a sign of the United States' serious commitment toward achieving a just and comprehensive peace in the region, and confirms that Syria is the key to a solution and to a just and comprehensive peace. Furthermore, his participation reaffirms that the United States gives priority to achieving peace on the Syrian and Lebanese tracks in 1996.

'Still Premature To Talk About Optimism'

JN0701074896 Paris Radio Monte Carlo in Arabic 0500 GMT 7 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] With respect to peace between Syria and Israel, Ambassador Walid al-Mu'allim, head of the Syrian negotiating delegation, has stressed that a positive atmosphere prevailed in the negotiations held near Washington. He added that it is still premature to talk about optimism. This is what he told our Washington correspondent Hisham Milhim:

[Begin recording] [al-Mu'allim] Actually, a better atmosphere prevails. There is seriousness during these talks. For the first time in four years of talks, I can say that these talks have placed our footsteps at the beginning of the road. This road is fraught with difficulties. But if we proceed along this road and overcome the difficulties, we can say at the end of this road that reaching an agreement is possible.

[Milhim] On the return of the delegations to Washington, Ambassador al-Mu'allim said there is no agreement or commitment on this issue. But U.S. Secretary of State Christopher will discuss this during his tour. U.S. sources expect Christopher to announce the third round during his presence in the region. On what Syria expects from Christopher's tour, the Syrian negotiator said:

[Al-Mu'allim] The only agreement was on Christopher's tour. Christopher's tour means three things: First, an assessment by the U.S. administration of the results of the Wye Plantation talks and having his excellency the president and Peres assess these results. Second, Christopher will bring with him U.S. proposals on the topics he believes the two parties should discuss after the tour with U.S. participation. Third, he has a proposal on the resumption of the talks and the mechanism for their resumption. This depends on what will be decided in the two capitals with respect to Christopher's proposals. The negotiators have not made any commitment.

[Milhim] On reports that Israel has adopted a flexible stand on the issue of withdrawal, Ambassador al-Mu'allim said that the talks dealt with the timetable of the withdrawal which, for Syria, consists of full withdrawal to the 4 June 1967 lines. [end recording]

Views Remaining 'Big Gap,' Lebanon

JN0701124396 Damascus SANA in Arabic 0825 GMT 7 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Damascus, 7 Jan (SANA)—Walid al-Mu'allim, Syrian ambassador in Washington and head of the Syrian delegation to the Syrian-Israeli talks, has said: After six days of talks between the Syrian and Israeli delegations with active U.S. participation, I can say that we have set our feet at the beginning of a road. If we go on and overcome the many difficulties ahead, we can reach a peace agreement in the end.

Answering a question by the London Radio today on reports that the Syrian and Israeli sides admitted that there is big gap and differences in their stands, especially on security issues, and whether it is possible that the two sides will offer concessions in this field, al-Mu'allim said: In terms of security arrangements, there is an agreement between us and the Israelis called the objectives and principles paper. The most important thing in this paper is that security arrangements on both sides should be equal [mutasawiyah] and reciprocal [mutabadalah] and that no security procedure should encroach on a party's sovereignty and territorial integrity. Security arrangements should be discussed within this framework, which the two sides will adhere to. Al-Mu'allim added: During the talks in Maryland I explained our position, but I sensed that the Israeli side did not want to get into the details of this issue.

Asked whether the Israeli side explained why it refuses to get into these details, al-Mu'allim said: The Israeli side noted that it is not authorized to do so.

Al-Mu'allim said that the talks were meant to be held away from the media and daily preoccupations, that the parties to these talks were to remain in contact without a previously set agenda, and that all issues were to be discussed at the table. He noted: This new atmosphere proved that it is possible to set our feet at the beginning of a road that will lead to a peace agreement.

Al-Mu'allim was asked: Do you expect progress on the Lebanese track as well? And, do you not think that the issue of southern Lebanon will obstruct progress in the negotiations between Syria and Israel? Al-Mu'allim answered: First, I cannot speak on behalf of Lebanon. Second, there is an agreement between the Syrian and Lebanese leaderships stipulating that the Syrian and Lebanese agreements with Israel will be signed at the same time.

He added: When we presented our view on the issue of comprehensiveness at the talks, I reiterated what President Hafiz al-Asad said at his news conference in Cairo—that comprehensiveness in our view means reaching agreements with Syria and Lebanon at the same time. I sense a clarity and understanding in the positions of Israel and the United States, which support this inclination. [passage omitted]

Peres, Rabinovich View 'Successful' Talks

TA0501191696 Jerusalem Channel 2 Television Network in Hebrew 1800 GMT 5 Jan 96

[Political correspondent 'Imanu'el Rosen video report from the Wye Plantation in Maryland — live]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [Rosen] Six days of negotiations ended here a few minutes ago in a joint lunch. All parties agree that the talks were very successful. The foundations for real negotiations between Israel and Syria were laid for the first time. [passage omitted]

In a telephone conversation we held with him from here, Prime Minister Shim'on Peres told us a few minutes ago: The talks were very successful. We have ended the work on the cover of the negotiations, and it looks very good. Now we have to start writing the book. [passage omitted]

Ambassador Rabinovich, we have just heard that Syrian Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar' said: There is bad news from Maryland; we must wait for the secretary's visit. Are we hearing the same old Syrian tunes?

[Rabinovich] No. I believe that over the past six days, we have been through some ups and downs. Expectations were raised a lot and then lowered. Uri Savir hinted earlier that we have not yet attained a shared outlook with the Syrians on issues such as normalization. Nevertheless, we and Foreign Minister al-Shar' agree that U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher's visit to the region next week will provide a very good opportunity for an attempt to forge a joint agreement. [passage omitted]

Rabinovich, Savir Comment at End of Round

TA0501190196 Jerusalem Israel Television Channel 1 Network in Hebrew 1800 GMT 5 Jan 96

[Ya'aqov Ahime'ir video report from the Wye Plantation in Maryland — live]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Ahime'ir] The talks between Israel and Syria ended a few minutes ago. The joint U.S.-Israeli-Syrian statement is positive. Dennis Ross, the U.S. mediator, said in his concluding remarks that what has been attained in the past six days was not attained in the past four years. He said that he will give President Clinton a very positive report.

With me here are Uri Savir, head of the Israeli delegation, and Professor Itamar Rabinovich, Israel's ambassador to the United States. Mr. Savir, how do you sum up the discussions?

[Savir] In general, we will give a detailed and operative report to the prime minister and the foreign minister upon our return to Israel. The talks were positive. We clarified many issues. I believe that the second round of talks was more positive than the first. We are returning with a more concrete picture of the Syrian stands and, more importantly, of the way we can make progress in the future, because there is still much work to be done.

[Ahime'ir] Have the Israeli and the Syrian perception of peace become identical as a result of the six days of talks?

[Savir] I am less doubtful than in the past about the Syrian determination to attain peace — real peace, as the Syrians call it. I believe there is still much work to be done on the details of issues such as economic cooperation and normalization in order to incorporate them into the agreement.

[Ahime'ir] Could you outline the issues on which there is agreement or disagreement?

[Savir] There are understandings on certain issues. There is not a single real agreement in any area, because this was not the purpose of the talks. The aim was to attain a better understanding of each other and to try to forge the beginning of a process in which we can make progress and anchor Israel's interests in these issues. I believe that on issues such as the nature of peace, normalization, and mainly the comprehensive nature of the agreement.... [pauses] We heard the Syrians also saying that an Israeli-Syrian peace agreement will put an end to the Middle East conflict, which is definitely a step forward.

[Ahime'ir] Amb. Rabinovich, will you be able to tell Prime Minister Shim'on Peres and Foreign Minister Ehud Baraq that we have a partner for negotiations, as the talks so far have not been negotiations?

[Rabinovich] First, I would like to place these six days on a certain continuum. They were preceded by three and a half years of negotiations. Any amount of enthusiasm about these six days must take into account the fact that whatever was attained was based on foundations that were set before and should be completed in the coming days. The partner was there before. Since the end of 1993, we have felt that Syria wants to make peace. The negotiations are to determine whether Syria's peace corresponds with our terms. I believe we all feel that the gaps in this area have been narrowed down over the past few days.

[Ahime'ir] I understand that the elimination of Yahya 'Ayyash was not mentioned or did not cast a shadow over the talks?

[Savir] It was mentioned by Amb. Rabinovich, but no shadow was cast over the talks.

[Ahime'ir] Thank you, gentlemen.

Peres Briefs Christopher on New Objective in Talks

TA1101115596 Tel Aviv MA'ARIV in Hebrew 11 Jan 96 p 10

[Report by Hemi Shalev and Ben Kaspit]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Today, U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher and Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad will hold a meeting that Jerusalem has termed "crucial" for the future of the Israeli-Syrian negotiations. Christopher will point out to al-Asad that he must decide now on the nature of the ties Syria will be prepared to establish with Israel, because without such a decision, there is no chance for a breakthrough.

At a meeting with Christopher last night, Prime Minister Shim'on Peres announced that al-Asad must choose between a "fast, high-level" and a "slow, low-level" track. Peres said he must "be on top of the situation" in order to be able to make the correct decision about the date of the Israeli elections.

According to high-ranking Jerusalem sources, Israel informed Christopher that as there is apparently no substantial prospect of attaining a peace accord with Syria before the elections, a different objective should be sought: an agreement of principles and an al-Asad-Peres summit by May.

Peres further informed Christopher that Israel "will be very hard put" to accept the Syrian demand for an Israeli withdrawal to the 4 June 1967 borders. Political sources in Jerusalem said that the message conveyed to the Americans was that Israel will be unable to reach an agreement unless al-Asad's stands on the issue of the withdrawal line become more flexible.

[Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew on 11 January carries a report by Aluf Ben on pages A1 and A8, adding: "A delegation headed by the chairman of the Norwegian Parliament arrived yesterday in Israel, following a visit to Syria. The delegates told Minister Yosi Beilin that Damascus is ready to compromise on the issues of normalization and security arrangements but not the borders and that it insists that Israel should withdraw to the 4 June 1967 border."]

Political elements stated that Israel has not waived its demand for early warning ground stations on the Golan and that this demand will be raised in the upcoming talks with the Syrians. The elements further said that Israel will demand that the demilitarized zone on the Syrian side extend all the way to Damascus and that only limited troops be allowed to enter the demilitarized zone.

Another disagreement that remains unresolved at this stage is the Syrian refusal to introduce normalization concurrently with withdrawal. Israel is demanding embassies and warm relations simultaneously with the withdrawal.

The compromise, if and when one is achieved, is expected to be based on a shortened period of withdrawal — a year and a half — in exchange for a Syrian compromise on the issue of concurrent withdrawal and normalization. [passage omitted]

[Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew at 1100 GMT on 11 January carries a related report by political correspondent Udi Segal, adding that "U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher is leaving for Damascus this afternoon and Israel is eagerly waiting for the news he will bring from there. Israel's message to Hafiz al-Asad is: Give your delegation a mandate to conduct in-depth discussions on all the issues so that we can make progress.

While the Israelis and the Americans speak of a pressing and tight schedule because of the elections, Hafiz al-Asad, however, speaks about having plenty of time. He told a delegation of Norwegian parliamentarians who asked him about timetables: I have a day, I have a week, I have a year, I even have a generation. The Norwegians added that al-Asad spoke very appreciatively of Shim'on Peres."

[In a recorded passage, Minister Yosi Beilin reacts to al-Asad's remarks by saying: "I believe he has been playing this game for a very long time, maintaining an atmosphere that says: It may well be that democratic countries face the problem of elections. I do not have such a problem; I have all the time I need. If al-Asad continues to play like he has plenty of time and to tell us — If you are pressed for time, please make concessions — he will not find an Israeli partner."]

Algeria

'Arafat Makes Statement After Meeting With Zeroual

LD1001200396 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic 1830 GMT 10 Jan 96

[Italicized passages are recorded]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] President Liamine Zeroual, today received Palestinian President Yasir 'Arafat at the headquarters of the presidency. [passage omitted]

Following the meeting, 'Arafat gave the following statement:

['Arafat] *First, I have come to congratulate his excellency the president on the great success which took place in Algeria, as represented by the Algerian people's turnout at the elections, which — if it was indicative of anything — indicates the nobility of descent of this people, their vigor and pride, of which we are proud. This is the people of the one and half a million martyrs.*

I then congratulated his excellency the president on his success in the elections, and winning the confidence of the heroic and great people, the Algerian people.

At the same time, I put his excellency the president in the picture on the developments which we have achieved recently, particularly the implementation of the second phase and our receipt of all our towns, villages, camps, hamlets, and all inhabited areas in the West Bank. For the first time, the Christian Christmas celebrations took place under the Palestinian flag, and under the auspices of the Palestinian National Authority.

I have also thanked him for this Algerian stance which supports the Palestinian people in the most difficult of its conditions, and at the most critical times.

I have also thanked his excellency the president for Algeria's participation with the Non-Aligned Movement's [NAM] delegation in the elections. God willing, the Algerian envoy will arrive after tomorrow with his brothers from the NAM countries, particularly as we have insisted that the elections be held under a comprehensive international patronage.

Commenting on the results of the ministerial meeting of the countries donating aid to the Palestinian Authority, which was held yesterday in Paris, President 'Arafat, said the following:

['Arafat] *By God, what we have come out with are positive results, and I sincerely hope that these positive results are translated into facts in reality, God willing. We do not forget the Algerian delegation's participation in this important conference, and I have thanked the president for sending an Algerian envoy to participate with us in this conference, because that gave us a push in front of the world.*

Concerning his future view of the second round of Palestinian-Israeli talks, scheduled for next May, 'Arafat said:

['Arafat] *The elections underway are the basis and the main foundations of the independent Palestinian state, that is, a legislative council, presidential elections, and Palestinian land. Actually, the final phase of the talks will take place in May. In the forefront of the issues to be discussed will be holy Jerusalem, the first qiblah [direction to which Muslims turn in prayer], and the third of the two holy places, the place from which Prophet Muhammad, may God's prayers and peace be upon him, ascended to heaven, and the birthplace of Jesus, may God's peace be upon him, the settlements, the old refugees, because as far as the new refugees are concerned, we have started to discuss their immediate return in a quadripartite Jordanian-Egyptian-Palestinian-Israeli committee, and following that the border will be discussed. God willing, we shall pray together at al-Aqsa Mosque.*[passage omitted]

Zeroual Announces Members of New Government

Members Appointed

LD0501123396 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic 1130 GMT 5 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] We received the following statement from the Presidency of the Republic 10 minutes ago:

At the proposal of Prime Minister Ahmed Ouyahia, President Liamine Zeroual today appointed the members of the government.

Over to Nourredine Moussadek with the details:

[Moussadek] Indeed, according to the statement released by the Presidency of the Republic, the ministers are as follows:

— Foreign affairs: Ahmed Attaf
— Justice minister: Mohamed Adami
— Interior, local authorities, and environment minister: Mustapha Benmansour
— Finance minister: Ahmed Benbitour
— Industry and restructuring minister: Mourad Benachnou
— Energy and mines minister: Amar Mekhloufi
— War veterans minister: Mohamed Said Abadou
— National education minister: Slimane Cheikh [former culture minister]

— Communications and culture minister: Mihoub Mihoubi [former presidential spokesman]
— Higher education and scientific research: Boubekeur Benbouzid
— Agriculture and fisheries minister: Noureddine Bahbouh
— Health and population minister: Yahia Kaidoum
— Labor, social protection, and vocational training: Hacene Laskri
— Posts and telecommunications minister: Mohamed Salah Youyou
— Religious affairs minister: Ahmed Merani
— Housing minister: Kamel Hakimi [new]
— Equipment and urban planning minister: (Smain Dime) [new]
— Youth and sports minister: Mouldi Aissaoui [new]
— Small and medium-sized enterprises minister: Abdelkader Hamitou [new]
— Commerce minister: Abdelkrim Harchaoui [new]
— Tourism and handicraft minister: Abdelaziz Ben M'hidi [new]
— Transport minister: Said Bendakir [new]
— Minister delegate to the finance minister in charge of budget: Ali Brahiti
— Minister delegate to the prime minister in charge of planning: Ali Hamdi [new]
— Minister delegate to the prime minister in charge of national solidarity and family: Mrs (Rabia Mechrane) [new]
— Minister delegate to the prime minister in charge of administrative reform and civil service: Amar Harkat [new]
— Secretary of state at the Foreign Ministry in charge of cooperation and Maghreban affairs: Lahcene Moussaoui [new]
— Secretary of state at the Foreign Ministry in charge of the Algerian community abroad: (Tidjani Salaoundji) [new]
— Secretary of state at the Labor, Social Protection, and Vocational Training Ministry in charge of vocational training: Tahar Kaci [new]
— Secretary of state at the Agriculture and Fisheries Ministry in charge of fisheries: (Bouguerra Soltani) alias Abou Jarra [new]
— Secretary of state at the Interior, Local Authorities and Environment Ministry in charge of environment: Ahmed Noui [new]
— Secretary General of the government: Mahfoud Laacheb

[Algiers Radio Algiers in French at 1130 GMT on 5 January in a similar item says that the Party of Algerian Renewal, led by Nourreddine Boukrouh, and Hamas, led by Mahfoud Nahna, are represented in this government, without giving details]

New Foreign Minister Profiled

LD0501212196 Algiers ENTV Television Network in Arabic 1900 GMT 5 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] To acquaint you more with the members of the new government, here are the profiles of all the members. We apologize in advance for not offering pictures of some new members of this government.

The minister of foreign affairs, Ahmed Attaf, age 43, was born in Ain Defla. A graduate of the diplomatic section of the National School of Administration, he has held many posts at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. He later held the posts of secretary of Algeria's permanent mission at the United Nations, ambassador to former Yugoslavia, and then to India. He then held the posts of secretary of state for cooperation and Maghreban affairs and was official spokesman for the previous government.

Ahmed Attaf is married and has three children. [passage omitted]

Zeroual Briefs Cabinet on Government

LD0701222896 Algiers ENTV Television Network in Arabic 1900 GMT 7 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] We begin our newscast with the meeting of the council of ministers under the chairmanship of President Liamine Zeroual, the first of the new government led by Ahmed Ouyahia who was appointed on 31 December, and which was formed on Friday 5 January 1996. [passage omitted]

The president said: I begin by offering my warmest congratulations to each of you for the trust placed in you through your appointment in the government. I hail in particular the entry of representatives of political parties in the new government. In fact, your appointment embodies your personal qualities and testifies to the very clear commitment of your parties to serving Algeria. It reflects also the important steps made in the domain of the sound and constructive practice of democratic pluralism in our country. [passage omitted]

President Zeroual said that Algeria is in a race against time in all that it has to achieve. He stressed the urgent needs and the considerable delays still noted in various domains, as well as the legitimate aspirations of the Algerian people. He underlined that Algeria has a working program blessed by the nation in complete democracy on 16 November last. The program was not just an electoral speech, and it will be realized God willing and thanks to efforts and strictness. [passage omitted]

Owing to the effect of stability and security on development, the president began his directives on aspects connected with public order by noting that the national commitment of the republic's security forces has led to a strong tightening of the noose on the will of subversive terrorism. Furthermore, the collective stand of the Algerian people in firmly denouncing this crime has also deprived its perpetrators and finally excluded them.

The government action, the president added, will make a decisive step for the final eradication of this epidemic. In this respect the issue concerns the policy of compassion which should be actively and continually adopted vis-a-vis our sons who have gone astray in order to let them rethink their position, this rethink which is getting broader and broader, thanks be to God. [passage omitted]

Touching on the economic reforms, the president of the republic went on to say: In the second place defects emerged in our development course and also the constraints imposed by the acute economic crisis make our economic reform an inevitable course if we want a fundamental economic revival for the Algerian economy. And we have always been keen to ensure a continuous development to our country, the president added. [passage omitted]

Algeria, President Zeroual further said, has begun carrying out a courageous program of economic reforms which should be continued methodically and with energy. While it is true that this program reflected foreign commitments made by our country, it is also true that this program reflected, in particular, options dictated by the national interest in its exact meaning. A genuine comprehension of the program for economic reforms, taking into account national interest, calls for a diligent and tangible eagerness to be loyal to our basic principles on national solidarity and social justice. This, the president said, requires a fair sharing of the necessary sacrifices, calls for a strict fight against waste and for giving the example in practising austerity. It also needs an active implementation of measures in favor of the deprived sections of the population, those with low incomes. The implementation of the program requires also a genuine culture of dialogue and consultation between all the social partners [trade unions, employers, and government], the president said.

Concerning the priorities of the hour, in particular housing, agriculture, small and medium-sized enterprises, job creation especially in favor of the young, the promotion of our hydrocarbon exports, naturally, President Zeroual reaffirmed that the instructions given in this field were valid, and he said: In order to realize such a vast program which involves other sectors including fisheries, handicrafts and tourism, Algeria must have an overall and integrated strategy likely to permit making judgements and setting priorities. Thus, there is a need to lay down such a strategy, a need dictated in fact by the rehabilitation of the national planning machinery which should serve a growth that should be promoted through the freeing of initiatives, and the integration of our economy into the international market. [passage omitted]

When asked about Algeria's foreign activities, especially at the economic level, the president outlined the challenges which Algeria must face in the foreign arena. He gave the necessary directives that would allow our diplomatic corps to respond effectively to the goodwill which has emerged toward Algeria, to open and consolidate other horizons for the Algerian people's genuine readiness in order to promote friendship and cooperation with all peoples.

The president of the republic said in this respect: I expect our diplomatic corps to work with a full commitment to highlight Algeria's determination to establish the edifice of the Arab Maghreb which is a part of our national destiny. I also expect it to further contribute in enhancing our ties with our natural areas of Arab and African consolidation. It also has to work to establish fair partnership relations between Algeria and the EU, he added. [passage omitted]

Our people will choose its representatives in the legislative body and at the local level. These goals are an inevitable necessity with no backing down from them. Their political conditions have been already set clearly whether they are related to the political or legal conditions or the organizational dimension, President Zeroual said. President Zeroual added: Meeting these conditions will speed up the consolidation of our development efforts, holding legislative and local elections.

President Zeroual added: With regard to these [elections], the state has suggested the path of dialogue to speed up the availability of the necessary conditions for these election dates. [passage omitted]

The president concluded by recalling our people's aspirations, the fundamental principles which must guide the work of the future government. In this respect Mr. Zeroual stressed some key principles which he summed up as follows:

First: If there is a great lack of services we should not forget that our people's trust is what we need first and foremost. [passage omitted]

Second: Under these difficult circumstances, every Algerian must practice, more than any time before, austerity and hard work. The state at all levels must set an example and be fair in its dealings. [passage omitted]

Algerian jurisdiction, President Zeroual added, must be committed to and fair in serving citizens who are equal before the law on the one hand and maintain its image and credibility on the other hand.

Third and last, Mr. Zeroual said, the brave Algerian people have the legitimate right to know everything that is related to its affairs and interests. This dictates that state bodies avoid harmful demagogy and adopt the transparent language of truth. This also applies to the national media whose sound flourishing [as heard] remains one of the state's permanent goals. It [the media] also has duties which it must carry out in order to promote subjective information which is synonymous with real liberties.

President of the Republic Liamine Zeroual concluded his address by renewing his best wishes for the new government in their work to serve Algeria.

New Parties Enter Government

LD0601093996 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in French 0800 GMT 6 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Six days after his appointment to the post of prime minister, Ahmed Ouyahia yesterday announced the composition of his government. The team includes 32 members, slightly more than the outgoing government. Fourteen of the main ministers come from Mr. Sifi's cabinet; two of them have changed posts and the others have kept their portfolios.

Hamas and the Algerian Renewal Party enter the government. Mahfoud Nahnah's movement gets the Ministry of Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises and the Secretariat of State for Fisheries. Noureddine Boukrouh's party will be in charge of the portfolio of tourism and handicraft.

Another first in Mr. Ouyahia's government, namely the creation of a Secretariat of State for the National Algerian Community Abroad which will be in charge of looking after the 4 million Algerians living throughout the world, and a Secretariat of State in charge of the Environment.

GIA Declares 'War' on FIS, AIS

LD0801184996 Kuwait KUNA in Arabic 1617 GMT 8 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Tunis, 8 Jan — The Algerian news agency, monitored here, has quoted today's Algerian LA TRIBUNE as saying that the Armed Islamic group [GIA] has declared war on the Islamic Salvation Front [FIS] and its military wing the Islamic Salvation Army [AIS]. Citing a statement by the GIA, the French language newspaper said: "War has been declared on the Islamic Salvation Front and its allies."

The statement asserted that the Islamic Salvation Army has "deviated and now supports democracy and elections," which are rejected by the GIA, which also calls for continuing the armed struggle against the Algerian government.

The GIA criticizes the AIS for: "Not pledging allegiance to the [Armed Islamic] Group, in line with the joint statement made by them, and also for not adhering to the Koran and Sunnah."

Egypt

Mubarak Briefed on Development Plans

NC0701170096 Cairo Arab Republic of Egypt Radio Network in Arabic 1250 GMT 7 Jan 96

[Report on statement by Information Minister Safwat al-Sharif on President Husni Mubarak's meeting with Prime Minister Kamal al-Janzuri and several ministers at the Presidential Office in Cairo on 7 January; from "The World on the Air" program — recorded]

[FBIS Translated Text] During today's meeting President Mubarak reviewed several reports, the first being a political report about the results of Egyptian mediation between Yemen and Eritrea to reach a peaceful solution between the two countries. Earlier the foreign minister carried messages from President Mubarak to the Eritrean and Yemeni presidents asserting that Egyptian mediation efforts to find a solution to the two countries' dispute will continue in line with the close ties between Egypt and both these countries on the Arab and African levels.

President Mubarak also reviewed several economic reports, notably a comparative study about lessons to be learned from Asian countries' economic progress and the benefits they obtained through international cooperation, investment, and the use of various types of modern technology. The study refers to the Egyptian economy's resources and its ability to achieve progress thanks to the positive results already shown by the economic reform program. The public business sector has been developed, the private sector's property base has been expanded, trade has been liberalized, the private sector's role has been enhanced and allowed to contribute to the country's economic growth, and the prices of agricultural and industrial products have been deregulated.

President Mubarak remarked that any studies that Egypt undertakes in view of the above reports must be realistic, not extravagantly optimistic, and take the country's actual capability into account. He said economic programs must be clear and specific, based on an international outlook and a willingness to cooperate with other countries and use technologies capable of increasing the quantity and improving the quality of Egyptian products.

The president declared that economic progress is the proper way to raise living standards, create new jobs, attain the citizen's hopes of a better life, and assert Egypt's place on the world map in light of current international changes.

President Mubarak added that Egypt is ready for a fresh start based on well-planned, objective, and serious projects in which all of the state's institutions take part. He noted that all possible opportunities will be given to individuals who wish to show initiative and contribute to economic process.

He asserted the need to rely more heavily on local financing and avoid borrowing from abroad.

Prime Minister Kamal al-Janzuri stressed that the government plans to hasten economic growth and get rid of any obstacles that slow higher production in the public business sector and the private sector. He added that new investment opportunities will be provided to the private sector in the sphere of large-scale projects to reduce the burden on the state's budget and hence avoid borrowing.

President Mubarak said that a period of four weeks has been given to the working groups, mentioned by the prime minister yesterday, to submit an integrated study about the political, economic, and social aspects of the economic process in the coming stage. This will include proposals to eliminate all obstacles facing investment in a way that will keep Egypt a country able to attract Egyptian, Arab, and foreign investors.

President Mubarak said it is necessary to continue providing incentives and guarantees to investors, reduce the burdens on exporters and on productive companies and projects to encourage them to employ more people and exploit more resources, and reconsider the price of land allotted for new projects to encourage greater investment.

President Mubarak reviewed a report on international economic relations and international cooperation; a report on the status of public business sector companies, including some which are offering shares for sale to the public; and a report on technical training and the development of educational curricula, with the help of the public, to facilitate the use of technology in economic projects.

He stressed the importance of sending teachers on training courses abroad, where they have the opportunity to view modern methods of education.

President Mubarak reviewed a report on rural development and the improvement of services in Egyptian villages to ensure the development of a productive society countrywide.

He listened to a report on scientific research and the type of technology suitable for Egyptian society that can strike a balance between the use of modern technology and the creation of new jobs for young people.

He reviewed a report on the new technology valley project, built on an area of 16,000 feddans, and the sections of this project that have already been completed. The president instructed that a plan for administering the project be drawn up and urged that the best possible plan be selected. The prime minister and the ministerial working groups will offer several alternative plans on how to administer the project, benefiting from the experience of advanced countries who have built similar projects, including the United States, France, and Japan. President Mubarak visited the site of the Japanese project during his last visit to that country.

President Mubarak called for flexibility in implementing the above project.

The president also discussed a report on developing the country's financial and currency policies. He stressed the importance of building a sound and positive relationship between the taxpayers and the revenue service and of eliminating any tax or tariff obstacles that hinder investment. He said a realistic study is needed in this case that will assess the benefit to society of each project.

He explained that imposing heavy taxes on investors or project builders might bring in an immediate revenue for the state but this is not important. What is important in the long run, he said, is that these projects succeed and create jobs. He pointed out that these projects can pay taxes after they succeed and grow.

He reviewed a report on the supply of basic commodities and the Supply Ministry's plan for internal and foreign trade that seeks to provide sufficient supplies for the local market and create a surplus for exportation.

The president noted the importance of protecting consumers and maintaining control over the markets to prevent the sale of defective commodities and safeguard the citizens' health.

Mubarak Discusses Domestic Issues, Gore's Visit

NC0801073496 Cairo MENA in Arabic 0610 GMT 8 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 8 Jan (MENA) — President Husni Mubarak has disclosed that he planned the recent cabinet reshuffle last summer. He added that the cabinet reshuffle was a calculated step based on accurate and thorough studies to insure that work in the coming phase will have clear bases.

In a statement published today in the newspaper MAYU, organ of the ruling National Democratic Party [NDP], President Mubarak said he did not wish to announce the cabinet reshuffle in advance in order to serve public interests and to keep work going in all sectors without hindrance or jeopardy.

President Mubarak affirmed that the reshuffle aims to streamline political activity and promote work to cope with world developments. He noted that he evaluated the work of the ministers thoroughly and defined the capabilities of each one. The reshuffle took place in light of this assessment.

President Mubarak said we have entered the start-up phase. We hope that we will soon see great achievements in all sectors and quicker steps so that a tangible dividend will be seen by the citizens, especially those in the low-income bracket.

President Mubarak said the next step will be to change the governors. There will be a large-scale reshuffle of governors in order to inject new blood into the governorates and embark on a large-scale development process that will boost the state's general budget. He added that we are currently assessing the performance of the governors based on their actual achievements, their contribution to the development process in their governorates, and their responsiveness to citizens' demands and concerns. He said we will assess what each governor has offered and what he has failed to offer. He asserted that this reshuffle of governors will be announced in the second half of this month.

President Mubarak said Egypt will continue to depend on its indigenous resources and to minimize foreign borrowing, therefore, I can say that in following this poli[illegible] since January 1991 we have not borrowed a single dollar. He noted that he laid down strict conditions for any party that wants to borrow. One condition is that they must specify how they will repay such loans out of their own budgets, not from the state budget. He said all parties have complied with these conditions, refraining from borrowing and relying on themselves and what they are allocated from the state budget.

President Mubarak noted that the completion of the infrastructure in Egypt has cost a lot. Had we not finished this infrastructure, Egypt would not have been able to advance a single step. He added that the cost of rebuilding the infrastructure equals the amount of foreign debts written off. In other words, we consider that this infrastructure was built free of charge. By all standards this is a great achievement which has had a clear impact on the development process.

President Mubarak said we always favor freedom for a responsible press. I will not hesitate to amend laws in order to uphold this freedom and protect the journalists, he affirmed, noting his support for freedom of the press. He said that any difficulties or obstacles facing the journalists displeases him.

President Mubarak said there will be no changes in the leadership of the NDP. He said the NDP will have an effective role in identifying and solving the problems of the masses in the coming phase. The NDP will also discuss the bills affecting the people's livelihood before submitting them to the People's Assembly.

Regarding U.S. Vice President Al Gore's upcoming visit to Egypt, President Mubarak said their talks will deal with promoting bilateral relations within the framework of the partnership agreement, from which we are trying to get maximum benefits. The talks will also cover the situation in the Arab region, the issues in the peace process, and handling these issues until a comprehensive and just peace is achieved in the region.

President Mubarak explained that Egypt has excellent relations with all Arab countries without exception. There are cooperation, understanding, and constant contacts between Cairo and the various Arab countries. He singled out relations with Saudi Arabia, which he described as relations of brotherhood and strong friendship. He said our policy is to maintain strong relations with the fraternal Arab countries.

Musa Discusses Gore's Upcoming Visit With Officials

NC0601095596 Cairo MENA in Arabic 0835 GMT 6 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 6 Jan (MENA) — Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa has stated that he met last night with the members of the Egyptian side to the Egyptian-U.S. Presidential Council set up within the framework of the Mubarak—Al Gore initiative. The Egyptian side discussed the council's role in promoting investment relations, as well as bilateral relations, in advance of U.S. President Al Gore's visit to Cairo on 14 and 15 January as part of a regional tour.

Musa's meeting with the members of the Egyptian side to the council ended early this morning. He said he had explained to the Egyptian side the outlines of Egypt's foreign and economic policy.

Musa Leaves for Paris To Attend Meeting on PA Aid

NC0801111296 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1040 GMT 8 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 8 Jan (MENA) — Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa left Cairo this morning for Paris on a three-day visit. While there, he will attend the meetings of the donor states for the Palestinian Authority [PA], which will open tomorrow with the attendance of foreign ministers of 40 countries.

Musa will meet on the sidelines of the meetings with Palestinian President Yasir 'Arafat, Israeli Foreign Minister Ehud Baraq, U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher, and French Prime Minister Alain Juppe to discuss subjects related to the peace process and current regional and world issues.

New Cabinet Holds First Meeting Under al-Janzuri

NC0601095196 Cairo MENA in Arabic 0905 GMT 6 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 6 Jan (MENA) — The new cabinet held its first meeting under Prime Minister Dr. Kamal al-Janzuri this morning. It discussed the next phase of the action plan in light of President Husni Mubarak's speech at the opening of the new parliamentary session and the instructions contained in his letter designating Prime Minister al-Janzuri. The cabinet also discussed coordination among the various ministries.

After his meeting with President Mubarak and Interior Minister Hasan al-Alfi this morning, Prime Minister al-Janzuri said the cabinet will discuss the next phase of the action plan at its first meeting today. He added that it is expected that he will deliver his government policy statement before the People's Assembly toward the end of January.

Interior Minister Hasan al-Alfi said that the proposal he made at the recent Arab interior ministers meeting in Tunis on setting up a Security Training Center in Cairo is still being studied.

On the projected security agreement between Egypt and Yemen, al-Alfi said he will discuss this topic with the Yemeni interior minister, who began a visit to Egypt today. He explained that the agreement includes clauses on the exchange of information and extradition of defendants.

Al-Janzuri Holds News Conference

NC0601161996 Cairo Arab Republic of Egypt Radio Network in Arabic 1230 GMT 6 Jan 96

[News conference by Prime Minister Kamal al-Janzuri with unidentified correspondents following the new cabinet's first meeting in Cairo on 6 January — recorded]

[FBIS Translated Text] [al-Janzuri] In the name of God, the compassionate, the merciful. Thank you all for attending this news conference. In view of the fact that today's meeting was the first this new cabinet held, I have decided to talk to you. First of all I wish, on behalf of the cabinet, to express our thanks and appreciation to His Excellency President Muhammad Husni Mubarak for the great trust he has placed in this cabinet. Also, on behalf of my colleagues in the cabinet, I wish to voice thanks and appreciation to the esteemed Dr. 'Atif Sidqi, the former prime minister, and to the other colleagues who formerly worked with us and have now left the cabinet, for their sincere efforts under the chairmanship of our esteemed brother Dr. 'Atif Sidqi. Their contributions will not be forgotten. We repeat our thanks to Dr. Sidqi as we did during the cabinet meeting itself.

The challenges now facing our nation are big tasks as illustrated by the existence of international and regional blocs. The foremost challenge is to increase our growth and production rates. Egyptian resources and the great Egyptian people should enable us to multiply our growth rate progressively. The growth rate must stay ahead of the population increase when the 21st century begins to make it possible for us to find jobs for new workers entering the labor market at an estimated rate of 400,000 or 500,000 annually. Employment means higher revenues and better living standards. Hence it is a major and necessary task. Furthermore, to place the Egyptian economy on competitive footing with the rest of the world, our trade volume must increase. This does not mean increasing our exports only but also our imports, notably the importation of semi-manufactured products that will be used for the production of other products, not consumer imports. A challenge of such magnitude, involving the increase of production, providing jobs in the numbers cited above, and increasing the volume of trade, needs financing. Like many other countries, the financing available to Egypt as a state is not enough and therefore the government must seek the assistance of the private sector or borrow from abroad. Foreign borrowing is not desirable because it lays a burden on future generations. Hence, we must encourage the private sector including Egyptian, Arab, and foreign investors to invest. During our meeting today, we formed working teams to handle the expected challenges in the various spheres, notably the problems that are facing investments. In our next meeting, in about 10 days God willing, we will discuss the problems that hinder investment notably legislative, administrative, and tax problems and also the accessibility of land on which to set up new projects and the availability of funds. We assert that the Egyptian Government is doing all it can to attract foreign, Egyptian, and Arab investors. It is not right at all for us to be satisfied with the $300-400 million invested in Egypt in the past few years. There are other countries in the region in which investments are several times this amount. In view of its resources and capabilities, Egypt has the right to seek more investors. I wish to emphasize this point to the Egyptian public: When we begin handling the challenge of increasing production, employment, and trade, we will not impose new burdens on the citizens in the form of new taxes or fees. All we are seeking with regard to tax revenues is to enlarge the taxpaying community, that is to increase the number of taxpayers, not to raise the tax rate. We will confront tax evaders by legal means and avoid administrative heavy-handedness in handling tax evasion. These are the things I wish to say now. The issues we raised during the cabinet meeting will be studied by about 20 working teams. Every issue will be studied, the problems involved in it will be defined, and the necessary solutions set forth. These will be submitted to the cabinet and after the cabinet approves them, we will make sure that the solutions are being implemented. Most of the working teams are involved in an effort to ease the burdens of the Egyptian citizens who have made many contributions over the past few years. The time has come for them to reap the fruits of the efforts they made. I thank this great nation to which I am pleased to belong.

[Correspondent] [Question indistinct]

[Al-Janzuri] As I said before, among the working teams are several that will handle the demands of young people and others will tackle the housing problem and all the other public demands. Many in the working teams, many of the ministers, who were also part of the former cabinet, know that we needed to make a comprehensive but swift review of the problems in order to set forth the necessary solutions. God willing, the people will soon realize that decisions have been made to ease the burdens of the Egyptian citizens as far as possible.

[Correspondent] Prime Minister, the former government remedied the budget deficit by imposing administrative fees and new taxes? Are you saying that the new government will not resort to the same method?

[Al-Janzuri] During the former period, it was inevitable to impose various fees and taxes to remedy the budget deficit. We needed revenues, however, we have reached a point where we have no right to impose new burdens on Egyptian citizens. What we will do is to increase state revenue by increasing the number of taxpayers without raising taxes or imposing new fees. I assure the Egyptian citizens that there are no plans to impose new burdens on them.

[Correspondent] It has been announced that the state's plan is to employ 400,000 or 500,000 graduates annually. How can we best benefit from the energy of these youths instead of using them as mere figures and employing them for the sake of employment only?

[Al-Janzuri] If we break down the figure of the people employed [by the state] we will find that this figure does not exceed 70,000 to 100,000 [annually]. These are employed by the state to replace those retiring or leaving service. Between 70 to 75 percent of the youths are employed by the private sector. This is why I said in the beginning that this is the real goal; namely, to encourage the private sector, which is the refuge for absorbing these graduates. It is not a question of adding names to the list of people employed by the state's administrative apparatus, but to the list of producers. They cannot be producers unless they work for the private sector.

[Correspondent] Has the law, or the draft law, for social solidarity been discussed?

[Al-Janzuri] One of the 20 working teams deals with the question of solidarity, which will be examined by a team of ministers. God willing, it will be subject to a discussion and a decision.

[Correspondent] How can the government face the rising increase in prices? [words indistinct] in prices and at the same time maintain free trade through supply and demand?

[Al-Janzuri] Let us first see why prices increase. Prices increase because we still rely on commodities which we import and which increase in price abroad. We continue to receive between 7 to 8 billion pounds [per year] from Egyptians working abroad to their families here. This money goes into consumption without generating any production. During the past period, we gave a great push to the infrastructure which has yet to materialize in production. In the coming stage, God willing, this infrastructure will be put to use in productive projects that will produce goods. Thus, the imported consumer goods, whose increase in price is felt by the people, will cost more than their local equivalent. I cannot say that in that case prices will go down. All I can promise is that prices will not increase by the same rate that used to exist in the previous stages.

[Correspondent] It has been announced that the per capita income will increase by 150 percent in the year 2002. How will this happen?

[Al-Janzuri] As I have already stated, the real challenge is to increase production. Productivity means the employment of productive labor, not just adding names to the list of civil servants. This productive labor constitutes an income. If production is multiplied, the per capita income will increase by an equal share. Thus, it is a question of increased productivity and investment and the need to eliminate obstacles. This will be translated into earnings for the Egyptian people.

[Correspondent] Western experts, including the IMF experts, believe that the [words indistinct] facing the Egyptian economy is meager exports, which is a major problem. What new measures does the Egyptian Government intend to adopt in its negotiations with the IMF to boost Egyptian exports?

[Al-Janzuri] Regarding the negotiations with the IMF and the World Bank, some may think that they have come to a halt, but they still exist and will stretch for years. These negotiations center on a program which we agreed to in 1993 and which we continue to abide by. It may look like the negotiations have stopped, but we constantly talk to each other. Some issues crop up in our discussion, such as the question of [devaluing] the currency, which we did not accept; or the question of exports and how to handle them. What increases exports is not currency [devaluation], but cost and quality. Thus, once we broaden the base of productivity, the volume of production will increase and the cost of the product will decrease. Thus, products will be competitive and exports can be increased. The real alternative is not to devalue the currency but to increase production year after year, improve the quality to make the product competitive, and decrease the cost. This is the program which we intend to follow. One of the issues to be discussed by the Cabinet is the question of production and exports and how to make products of the highest quality and at a minimum cost to be able to compete in regional and world markets. This is particularly so since we possess enough natural resources and manpower to make this happen.

[Correspondent] What about the plans for the governorates?

[Al-Janzuri] Among the programs to be discussed by the teams is one related to studying ways to improve public utilities, sanitary drainage, and potable water. Another team will discuss ways to accelerate the rural development project, which we started last year. This project will cover all Egyptian villages so that when we enter the 21st Century the Egyptian village will be completely different from what it was during this century and the previous century.

Israeli Spying Network Reportedly Uncovered

NC0801155296 Cairo AL-SHA'B in Arabic 5 Jan 96 p 1

[FBIS Translated Text] Informed Egyptian sources have reported that the security agencies have recently uncovered an espionage network working in Egypt for Israel. They noted that the defendants are being interrogated by the Higher State Prosecution Office under the supervision of counselor Hisham Saraya, first public attorney at the Prosecution Office. They said that Public Prosecutor counselor Raja' al-'Arabi will make a decision in the next few days to refer them to court.

The London-based Arabic daily Al-HAYAH reported that 'Amir Salman, an Egyptian from al-'Arish, Sinai, was apprehended a few days ago. He admitted that he is a member of the espionage network working for Israel and that he contacted officials in the Israeli intelligence service, Mosad, and provided them with "strategic" information in return for facilitating his smuggling drugs to Egypt via the Israeli borders.

These sources pointed out that the defendants admitted that the information they supplied to the Israelis focused on Egyptian activities in the Sinai and on Egyptian intentions regarding compliance with the peace agreement signed with Israel.

The Prosecution Office charged the members of the network with "seeking and contacting a foreign country — Israel — to harm the country's political, economic, and military position."

The memorandum of the State Security Intelligence Department submitted to the prosecution contained details on the activities and movements of the network members and "their repeated visits to Israel via certain border points to meet with officials in the Israeli intelligence service, receive specific assignments, train in intelligence operations, receive radio and secret codes, and send and receive messages via radio." Judicial sources pointed out that the punishment for these charges could be execution .

Bahrain

Security Forces Disperse Gatherings Outside Mosques

MM0801145996 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 7 Jan 96 pp 1,6

[Report by Hasan al-Luqays: "Clashes in Bahrain, Policeman Attacked, Gatherings Dispersed"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Manama — Clashes took place in several areas in Bahrain this week, including an attack by a group of individuals on a policeman who was taken to hospital in a serious condition, in addition to isolated acts of sabotage.

The security forces have also had to disperse gatherings outside some mosques which, according to an official Bahraini source, "the government does not want to be used for nonreligious purposes such as causing unrest and trouble."

The source explained that "the mosques are intended for God's worship and for prayers, and that the government's duty is to safeguard security and stability and to take legal measures to prevent these gatherings."

The security forces have also arrested some individuals for questioning following the discovery of an unexploded smoke bomb in one of Manama's commercial centers on New Year's Eve.

The Bahraini Interior Ministry announced on 16 December that it would not allow any illegal actions and that it would take appropriate measures to prevent any illegal gatherings, disperse them, and take legal action against those involved.

Prior to the statement being issued, the security authorities summoned some clerics to advise them that the government will apply the law which prohibits illegal gatherings, actions, and statements which would breach the country's peace and order.

Observers expect the Bahraini Government to resort to applying the law to the letter if the illegal gatherings and statements which would breach the country's peace and stability continue.

Members of 'Terrorist' Group Arrested

JN0901171196 Manama WAKH in Arabic 1430 GMT 9 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Manama, 9 Jan (WAKH)—An official source at the Bahraini Interior Ministry said that members of a group, which hurled a home-made concussion grenade [qunbulah sawtiyah] at 1830 local time on 31 December 1995 at a shopping center and at another site in al-Manama market, have been arrested. Members of the group gave detailed and full confessions to an investigating judge; their confessions were recorded. The group includes: Rida 'Abdallah Khalil Muhsin, student at the Mechanical Engineering Department of Bahrain University; 'Abd-al-Rida Muhammad Ahmad al-Shuwaykh, salesman; and Rida Mansur 'Abd-al-Nabi al-Khawajah, supervisor at a construction company.

In a statement to WAKH, the source said that immediately after the two incidents, the public security agencies began extensive investigations that resulted in the arrest of members of the terrorist group. Their confessions revealed their methods in preparing and planning these crimes and the role each of them played in implementing the crimes, which aimed at stirring fear among both the citizens and residents in the public places. They also said in their confessions that they were trained on how to produce home-made bombs from terrorist elements abroad.

The investigating judge ordered that the suspects be remanded in custody until they face trial.

The source concluded his statement by saying that the public security agencies are continuing their investigations to reveal all dimensions of this incident and to determine all the elements that instigated and were involved in it. The source underlined that the Interior Ministry, out of its concern to preserve law and order and protect the safety of citizens and residents, stresses that it will decisively face all actions that seek to disturb security and stability.

Saudi Arabia

Minister Says Dissident's Expulsion 'British Affair'

NC0601132696 Paris AFP in English 1304 GMT 6 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Dubayy, Jan 6 (AFP) — Saudi Arabia refused to be drawn Saturday [6 January] on Britain's decision to expel Saudi dissident Muhammad al-Mas'ari.

"It is a measure taken by the British Government over an affair which concerns it," Saudi Interior Minister Nayif Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz told the Arabic daily AL-HAYAH.

It was the first Saudi reaction to the deportation order against al-Mas'ari, who arrived in Britain 18 months ago after escaping from a Saudi prison.

The 49-year-old dissident has waged a vociferous campaign against the Saudi Government from his base in London, and the Home Office made clear his continued presence in Britain was endangering billions in Saudi defense contracts. He has eight days to appeal the deportation order, which came after pressure from Riyadh to gag al-Mas'ari or expel him to another country which would provide less of a platform for his views.

Several leading Arabic newspapers including AL-HAYAH have their headquarters in London.

The British newspaper THE GUARDIAN said Saturday that a leaked memo from the chief executive of the British arms company Vickers refers to "direct Saudi intervention" against al-Mas'ari and attempts to "stifle him."

Prince Sultan Indicates Dissidents To Lose Citizenship

LD0701183596 Riyadh SPA in Arabic
1648 GMT 7 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Riyadh, 7 Jan — His Royal Highness Prince Sultan Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz, second deputy prime minister, minister of defense and aviation, and inspector general, has urged the Iraqi regime to go back to its senses and not to let its unreasonable practices be a cause for depriving the Iraqi people of a life of prosperity and tranquillity. His highness expressed the hope that the Iraqi people will live in security, stability, and growth like other peoples. This came in a statement made by Prince Sultan today at the end of the graduation ceremony of the 49th batch of students of the King Faysal air force college.

Concerning the arms destined for Iraq and recently discovered by the Jordanian authorities, his highness said: I have nothing to say to this. We have all heard and read what came in the international press on this subject. [passage omitted]

Answering a question on the main issues he discussed with the U.S. secretary of defense who is currently visiting Saudi Arabia, Prince Sultan said: The visit of the U.S. defense secretary is a friendship visit, not an official visit, and when officials of two countries in charge of a specific sector meet, they discuss ways of developing relations between the two countries, and if there is something new, then we are accustomed to act first and then speak. [passage omitted]

On the Eritrean occupation of the Yemeni island Greater al-Hanish, his highness expressed his hope that understanding will prevail between the two countries instead of disputes and behavior that is not in the common interest.

On Iran's announcement of its intention to build a military airfield on Abu Musa island, which is disputed with the United Arab Emirates, and the contravention of this intention with the peaceful calls from the states of the Gulf Cooperation Council to Iran, his highness expressed the hope that there will be no friction between the two countries. His highness said: "Iran should agree to solve this issue through international arbitration."

Replying to a question on the British authorities' measures to deport some [Saudi] outlaws and turncoats, his highness said: "Saudi citizenship will be abolished if someone shuns his religion, country, and values."

Regarding the reaction at home and abroad to the indisposition suffered by King Fahd Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz, the custodian of the two holy mosques, the second deputy prime minister said: "That slight indisposition was [like] a referendum for the standing of King Fahd Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz, custodian of the two holy mosques, at the Islamic and international levels." His highness added: "There is absolutely no truth in what the malevolent and the envious are saying."

His highness stressed that the main aide of the custodian of the two holy mosques, his loyal crown prince and the second man in the country [Crown Prince 'Abdallah] will always and forever perform his duties, whether the custodian of the two holy mosques is at work or on leave. His highness said: Therefore, every complainer about this subject does himself injustice and we have absolutely nothing to say to him, except for the actual facts." [passage omitted]

Prince Sultan Gives Statement on 'Piece Shield'

LD0901204096 Riyadh SPA in Arabic
1830 GMT 9 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Riyadh, 9 Jan — His Royal Highness Prince Sultan Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz, second deputy prime minister, minister of defense and aviation and inspector general, stressed in a press statement today after inaugurating the command, control, and communications system of the Air Force's "peace shield project," that Arab regional security is linked to the confidence of the Arab states in each other.

His highness said: "This is peculiar to Arabs as whenever they have confidence in one another, they become more secure."

Asked whether his highness considers this system, which is considered to be the most modern in the world, represents the advanced warning for the Arab Gulf states, Prince Sultan Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz added: "In any case, we are at the service of the Arab Gulf states and their peoples anywhere and at any time."

Replying to a journalist's question about his impression after the inauguration of the command, control, and communications system of the Air Force, Prince Sultan

Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz said: "I would like to ask you the same question: What is your view and what have you seen and inspected? As far as I am concerned, I am one of the people who have worked in this sector and thus I cannot say anything about myself or my colleagues."

With regard to the future projects of the armed forces, his highness the second deputy prime minister, minister of defense and aviation and inspector general pointed out that work is continuing and will not stop, God willing.

His highness added, however: "As I have always said I cannot say anything about any future military work unless these things have been approved."

His Highness Prince Sultan reiterated that there is still a need for more military industries. This need is in accordance with the positive plan which has been drawn up in line with directives of both King Fahd Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz, custodian of the two holy mosques, and His Royal Highness Prince 'Abdallah Bin 'Abd-al-Aziz, crown prince, deputy prime minister, and commander of the National Guard, he added.

On the Kingdom's future interests in developing military industries, his highness added in his statement: "God willing, it is going to be much better next year."

Replying to a question on providing the Peninsula Shield forces with a rapid intervention force equipped to swiftly counter any possible aggression, God forbid, by a foreign power against any member of the Gulf Cooperation Council, His Highness Prince Sultan said: "This is the agreed plan."

In concluding his statement, Prince Sultan Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz thanked God Almighty for his benevolence and guidance saying: "The more we are thankful to Him the more we are going to be helped by Him." But he expressed, however, in his statement, his hope to continue the tireless efforts to develop the Saudi armed forces. At the same time, he urged [Saudis] to join the Saudi armed forces which, he affirmed, will be receiving every possible support.

CDLR Vows To Fight Despite UK Move Against al-Masari

MM0501142796 London CDLR MONITOR in Arabic 4 Jan 96

[Communique No. 43 of the Committee for the Defense of Legitimate Rights of Saudi Arabia, (CDLR) — received by fax 5 January: "Assurance and Clarification"]

[FBIS Translated Text] A decision was issued by the British Home Office for arrangements to be made to move Dr. [Muhammad] al-Mas'ari, a spokesman for the Committee [for the Defense of Legitimate Rights], to Dominica, a small island in a remote region of the Atlantic. The commentaries of reporters and journalists unanimously say that this decision is influenced by British-Saudi relations, as was admitted by the British Home Office under secretary. It is clear that the aim is to spare the British embarrassment with the Saudis and to try to put obstacles in the way of the Committee's activities.

The Committee wishes to assure all supporters and sympathizers that the appeal it is going to launch against the Home Office's decision is very promising, and that the Committee will continue the legal process right to the end. It is useful for the brothers to know that the process will take a long time, sufficient for major events to take place in the Arabian Peninsula. The Committee also stresses, just as it has always stressed, that its work and activities will continue as vigorously as ever, even if all those working in the Committee are deported. The Committee has taken all precautions to deal with any circumstances to ensure the continuity of its work.

We assure the brothers that the Home Office decision has actually secured for the Committee huge media support which has pushed its cause to the forefront of the media's interests since the decision was issued. The Committee could not have achieved such publicity even if it had paid millions of dollars.

The Committee expresses its thanks and appreciation for all those who have contacted it and expressed their sympathy and support, stressing to them that victory is the reward for anyone who raises the banner of reform.

London: Thursday 4 January 1996

United Arab Emirates

President Receives Eritrean Message on Yemen

JN0701160996 Manama WAKH in Arabic 1150 GMT 7 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Abu Dhabi, 7 Jan (WAKH) His Highness Shaykh Zayid Bin-Sultan Al Nuhayyan, president of the United Arab Emirates [UAE], received a written message from Eritrean President Isaias Afwerki on the current dispute between Eritrea and Yemen over the al-Hanish island. The message explains Eritrea's views toward this dispute.

Eritrean Internal Affairs Minister Ali Said Abdalla, who is currently visiting Abu Dhabi, relayed the message during a meeting with Deputy Prime Minister Shaykh Sultan Bin-Zayid Al Nuhayyan here today.

During the meeting, Shaykh Sultan underlined the importance of resolving the ongoing dispute between Eritrea and Yemen by peaceful means through a bilateral dialogue. He also urged an acceptance of the good offices currently under way by several fraternal and friendly countries. He indicated that this dispute could promote the interests of those lying in wait for the Arab and Islamic nation and coveting its territory, particularly the Red Sea region.

In a separate development, His highness the UAE president received a written message from Canadian Prime Minister Jean Chretien on bilateral ties and issues of common interest.

Roy MacLaren, Canadian minister of international trade, who is currently visiting Abu Dhabi, relayed the message during a meeting with Shaykh Sultan here today.

Yemen

President Salih Admits Clashes in South

LD0901225896 Kuwait KUNA in Arabic 2107 GMT 9 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Aden, 9 Jan (KUNA) — Yemen President 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih admitted the occurrence of armed clashes between the army and a tribe in the southern part of the country. This was the first official announcement about those clashes that have been continuing since last Saturday [6 January].

The Yemeni president pointed out in his speech at the ruling General People's Congress Party's extraordinary session, to the killing of a leading member of the party, Muhammad al-Kasadi, commissioner of the Rasd [placename as received] Province as a result of those clashes.

At the level of the theater of clashes in the southern governorate of Abyan, Yemeni Minister of State Fadl Muhammad Bin-'Aydarut al-Afifi arrived here today in a governmental attempt to contain the crisis.

Clashes had flared up at the beginning of this week between members from the al-Sa'di tribe, armed with heavy weapons, and the authorities at Rasd Province, a matter that required the intervention of forces from the army.

Arrivals here from the Yafa' area in Rasd Province said that the situation there was still tense, pointing out also to a meeting that the local authority in the province had held to discuss the situation, but it was not clear whether the local authority issued any decision.

The Rasd area is 240 km northeast of Aden.

Saudi-Yemeni Military Committee Holds Talks

LD0901132296 Riyadh SPA in English 1246 GMT 9 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Sanaa, Jan 9, SPA — The joint Saudi-Yemeni military committee, held its sixth round of talks in Sanaa last night under co-chairmanship of the Saudi chief of staff, General Muhammad Salih al-Hammad and his Yemeni counterpart Brigadier General 'Abdallah 'Ali 'Ulaywah.

The talks were guided by the outcome of meetings of the higher joint Saudi-Yemeni committee, which held its first session in Saudi Arabia last month.

Sanaa Radio said the military committee, during its first session of the sixth round of talks, had discussed a perspective of the higher committee regarding the mechanism of the joint military committee's performance to opt for the specified preparations between the two countries that could boost up further joint confidence to build bridges of bilateral contacts and harmony.

The radio added that the session was dominated by the brotherly spirits and mutual understandings on a number of issues that came up for discussion between the two sides.

Saddam's Son Reportedly Escapes Assassination Attempt

LD1101123096 Kuwait KUNA in Arabic 1119 GMT 11 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Tehran, 11 Jan (KUNA) — In a statement issued today, the Supreme Assembly of the Islamic Revolution of Iraq said that Qusay Saddam Husayn escaped an assassination attempt which took place minutes before his arrival at a palm grove in the al-Rashidiyah area 30 km east of Baghdad.

The statement, a copy of which was received by KUNA, pointed out that a time bomb exploded a few minutes before Qusay's arrival at the palm grove to attend a special ceremony marking the New Year.

The statement added that the security forces sealed off the area immediately after the explosion of the bomb and blocked all roads leading to it. Emergency vehicles were seen evacuating a number of people who were killed or injured in the blast.

It is worth mentioning that Qusay currently holds important and sensitive posts including special security and is the most important security figure directly linked to the head of the regime. He was recently appointed supervisor of the Revolutionary Guards.

Saddam Delivers Speech on Army Anniversary

JN0601102196 Baghdad Iraq Television Network in Arabic 0805 GMT 6 Jan 96

[Speech by President Saddam Husayn marking the 75th anniversary of the founding of the Army; place and date not given — live or recorded]

[FBIS Translated Text] In the name of God, the merciful, the compassionate. O great people, O brave men of our valiant Armed Forces; O zealous men of our glorious Arab nation: God's peace, mercy, and blessings be upon you.

On 6 January every year, Iraq and its people celebrate a special occasion. They look look not only at the present and to the future, but they also look at the past and what it can inspire in terms of its lessons and implications. This is because 6 January is the day on which the army of Arabism—the great army of Iraq—was founded. January arrived this year with its glowing historic firebrand, bravery, and medals of honor to tell the history of the collective organized military action in Iraq. This military action was absent for a long time until 1917, the era of the British occupation of Baghdad in the First World War, when the occupiers erected a statue for General [Stanley] Maude, commander of their army which occupied Baghdad, wearing his military uniform and mounted on his horse, upon which he entered Baghdad. The statue was erected in one of al-Salihiyah squares in front of the British Embassy. At the time that the Maude statue was erected, high and arrogant above all the Iraqis who walked the streets, there was no statue or monument in Baghdad of an Iraqi soldier or leader who carried out glorious deeds in Iraq's contemporary history. This was because the foreigner—who controlled the country through those who agreed to be his agents and be subservient to him for the sake of the seat of power or the future of the monarchies which came to Iraq by special arrangement with them—did not want to see the statue of their Gen. Maude competing with national statues from the 1920 revolution or other revolutions, or from the Iraqi Army and the history of its ancestors.

This year's January arrived to remind us of the past and to urge us to serve the nation and people. January, which engenders great, faithful, and pan-Arab emotions, arrived to herald an increasing number of Arab swords this year—swords which are seized by the Zionists and their American allies in known Arab countries. This happened after the traitors disavowed the pledge to continue the march on the national and pan-Arab road, or after their treachery was exposed long ago when they stabbed the armies of the Arab nation, even before the foreigner stabbed these armies — that is, when the official representatives of people and armies mortgaged their will to the foreigner.

Despite all the manifestations of pain January carries with it about events of this kind in the Arab homeland, January arrived with an air of euphoria, given its association with this occasion. January knows full well that the valiant, proud, faithful, and honest Iraqi Army — which represents January's kind, proud, and deep-rooted tree — was subjected to frequent attempts against it by the evil ones. They attempted to seize the swords of the heroes of its people after the evil ones — may they be accursed — undermine the political will of its leadership. However, they failed, and the swords of the free ones remained in their hands and in their sheaths. They remained uplifted with pride and their bosoms were decorated with the medals of glory — after these bosoms were filled with a great faith and confidence, supported by every stand of pride and honor embraced by the Arabs, who still cling to Arab honor and its banners along the path of struggle and jihad for the sake of the great national principles and the dear pan-Arab principles.

Given this, and on the basis of the correct perception of the meaning of commemorating six January, it is not enough for us to feel joy and express elation on the advent of this bright day. Rather, we will stand before history, not to record it in the manner resorted to by someone who seeks to avoid losing remembrance of events with the passage of time, but rather to justify its events when they are dealt with according to their proper context. Hence, the spirit of interaction, optimism, and confidence in these principles will be rejuvenated.

The armed forces of any country or nation are a vital part of the organized manifestation of the nation's might in general, and the capability of the nation's youths in particular. The armed forces, in their fighting action, represent the side that best shows the meaning of the nation's role and action. Given all this, our Armed Forces in Iraq have best represented a vital part of the history of our great people and that of our glorious nation according to all high-level standards.

O brilliant Iraqis: O zealous Arabs: For the army of any country of the nation — which is still partitioned into 22 states — to be described as the army of Arabism, there must be a convincing rationale. So, why was the Iraqi Army dubbed the army of Arabism?

The army of Iraq was described as the army of Arabism because, in the first place, it sensed — given its great responsibility — that it was established as a vital contributor to all that might upgrade the meaning and status of Arabism, so that it could be in harmony with these principles. This army adopted a position that vindicated this description in all the incidents that plagued the nation — incidents that required that this army, with its experience and principles, take such a position. This army has also recorded an immortal chapter in defending the Arabism of Iraq and confronting the trends and events whose initiators sought to cripple the meaning of Arabism. This chapter transformed Iraq's pan-Arab positions with a spirit of zeal and sacrifice that resulted in lively interaction with the nation's events and role.

The valiant Iraqi Army is one of few Arab armies, or possibly the only army that fought outside the borders of the country in which it was born four times against the army of the Zionist enemy. This army's stands are still recalled, and its principles reinforced on the battlefields in Sinai, the Golan, and occupied Palestine — in Janin, Kafr Qasim, Nabulus, Tulkarm, the Huwarah-Qalqilyah axis, Ramat HaKovesh, the Rotenberg position in the (Kishar) colony on the River Jordan, the Kawkab al-Hawa hills west of (Kishar), the Majami' village, the (Kol) colony, Zir'in, Ra's al-'Ayn, Majdal Yaba, the Kefar Yona colony, Kakon, and al-Tirah. This army has always had the honor of supporting its brothers and taking part in vigilance operations, such as its presence in sisterly Jordan to avert the the possibility of a Zionist incursion when Jordan's front was weakened following the 1967 aggression. The army of Arabism remained there for about three years. It returned to its camps in Iraq only after the September 1970 events in Jordan.

It is a great honor for this army of Arabism that its aircraft were the only aircraft among those of all Arab armies that defied the Zionist entity's air defenses, roaring over the skies of Palestine to pound their targets inside the Zionist entity. It is a great honor for this army that its al-Husayn and al-'Abbas missiles were the only missiles among those of all Arab armies that pounded their targets in that usurping, aggressor entity. Thus, is not this faithful, valiant army worthy of the honor of being described by Arabs as the army of Arabism? Did not the glorious second Arab al-Qadisiyah battle [the eight-year war with Iran] in its essence represent the best of our great people in defense of Arabism and the evil that threatened it? Did not the immortal Mother of Battles, in its most important, great, pan-Arab, and human principles, represent the nation's ability and spirit to resist the 30-state aggression? Yes, by God, the Iraqi Army is the army of the sincere, faithful, pan-Arab, and human Arabism, based on the great values of the Arab nation's glorious history and immortal heritage. This army is worthy of this name and honor. It is capable of maintaining this honor and its values, together with what all Arabs hope for from the Iraqi Army—the great, valiant army of Arabism.

But why is your national army dear, O lofty Iraqis and glorious Iraqi women? You know the answer to this question. It is because it is both a national and a pan-Arab army. This is why you celebrate this occasion on the 6th of January every year. Many happy returns. May God protect our Armed Forces and grant them the grace of faith, virtue, and glorious history.

You martyrs, the noblest of us all, O bright stars in the skies of Arabism and the skies of Iraq, may God's peace and blessings be upon you. May God grant you great glory, and have mercy on you in paradise. You are the homeland's shield, although you are in the eternal life. This is because the principles for which you sacrificed yourselves constitute the true support of the honor of nationalism and the homeland. Without these principles, any stand would lose its true support and base, and any man would lose his national and pan-Arab stand. You have sacrificed yourselves for the sake of these great and glorious principles. You have encouraged the men of Iraq and Arabism to compete and take these principles as an example in the future. These principles, and nothing else, will continue to be the symbol of honor. May your souls rest in peace while their wings flutter over Iraq and around us. God is great, God is great.

The army was called the army of Arabism based on its national and pan-Arab principles and values. The people and their state have a bright record regarding their stands toward pan-Arab issues, particularly after the state's principles were based on the dear pan-Arab principles of the great Ba'th Party since the inception of the 17-30 July 1968 Revolution.

Based on these principles, we can say, with the pride of those who are satisfied and pleased with their faithfulness to their commitments to a very dear person, that we are proud of performing our sacred duty.

Since the 17-30 July 1968 revolution, Iraq has been a major source of the charge that causes lightning and thunder in Arab skies. Iraq has always stood among the strong lions in the jungle, away from the jackals. Iraq also played a key role in pan-Arab action in all Arab countries, and was the first to come to the rescue of any Arab country in distress. Iraq did all of this in compliance with God's instructions that one should attend to the needs of neighbors first. Iraq has always been a catalyst for pan-Arab action.

Having done all that, Iraq still feels that it is required to make more efforts to add to its pan-Arab feelings a sense of satisfaction, by virtue of its belief that God is pleased with what the believers do. May the words and deeds of the small evildoers fail miserably.

O great people; O righteous sons and loyal brothers in our valiant Armed Forces: Last year was no different from the previous years of the blockade; perhaps it was harder. It was a difficult year in our life, because it was nearly the sixth year of the miserable, evil blockade. Despite all the hardships, the Iraqi people showed their true mettle by scoring great, vital victories in fields that require a strong, firm will. Thus, progresshas been achieved in all walks of life and on many fronts. Everyone has contributed to this progress in his own way to express patriotism and genuine belonging to this great people. These achievements came about in spite of all the social, economic, political, and cultural hardships created by the blockade and the schemes of the enemies who are opposed to our will, approach, and policy.

Despite everything we have done, if we take a closer look at major phenomena and minor details in the life of the individual and state institutions, we will find that there are some who are not living the conditions of the blockade. These people are not mobilizing their efforts, as they should, and are not invoking their human feelings toward their people and homeland. This is because their ability to understand things does not extend to what is higher and better. Or it could be that their humanitarian feelings toward their fellow citizens — regarding all small details of life — were not channeled properly when action was required.

We in the higher command of the state, the party, and the cabinet, have resolved to redouble our efforts in all walks of life and help those who have failed to perform their duties properly to develop or change. We are also determined to help those who have a sense of inadequacy to interact properly with all aspects of the lives of their people, by cautioning and alerting them, enforcing laws, or passing other necessary legislation to create the right balance in society and its economic conditions. Eventually, this is a gain for our entire great society, with all its sectors and interpretations, because social balance, stability, love, and security are the goals of every free, faithful, and national soul.

Last year, we enacted important laws to expand participation in decisionmaking and to carry out an auditing role in the social, economic, and cultural structure. These include the People's Local Councils Law, in accordance with which a responsible council is established in each subdistrict, the smallest administrative unit in governorates, in addition to the district and governorate councils. We developed the National Assembly Law to expand participation in decisionmaking with regard the higher echelon and legal structure of the state, in addition to the broad and deep participation in decisionmaking, legislation, and auditing in all fields, including the social, cultural, economic, and political fields.

We also achieved great strides in entrenching and honoring compliance with laws and building traditions inside state institutions to create a model of what should be done in the arena of the entire people on the basis of an understood slogan, from which there will be no deviation.

The state that does not respect or abide by law is the one which lacks all the components of a mature state. And people who do not respect or abide by law will—willingly or as a result of losing their will—lose their rights toward their state after failing to fulfill their duties and after missing the right path. Iraq has been a model state for humanity since the beginning. Its state was the first to be founded on laws. We recall the Code of Ashnunah, enacted in 1812 B.C. and the famous Code of Hammurabi which was enacted on 1762 BC.

Because the people of Iraq are a great people who have proved their awareness under very complicated circumstances, they should also prove that they are a model not only in their ability to face difficulties in the battlefield, but also in abiding by and complying with the law under the blockade and in the confrontation. This is because the people of Iraq are keen to underscore their commitment to legal duties so as to underscore and guarantee their legal rights.

On the Great March Day on 15 October 1995, our great people, including the personnel of our valiant Armed Forces, chose their course and leadership freely and democratically in a public referendum. Therefore, they should stress their respect for and compliance with their law, even when they direct meaningful criticism at it legally and legitimately to help the official agencies change or amend certain laws. We call on all the sons of our great people and their Armed Forces, including the honorable state employees, to abide by this. As ever, and to implement the newly declared economic policy, the leadership badly needs your support, you zealous Iraqis, glorious women, and the men of our valiant Armed Forces. We need your awareness, patience, understanding, care, and enthusiasm to implement and comply with this policy. This is in order to achieve this policy's objectives. As ever, these objectives will be for your sake and for your elevation and progress in this world to the satisfaction of God, God willing.

Last year, on the Great March Day, our people achieved the greatest successes in that phase. That was when they meaningfully proved their awareness on the Great March Day, thus dealing the biggest blow to the treacherous, lowly, and hostile ones in that year. Our people are worthy of that, because they are great people and the backbone of the Arab nation along its enlightened course, God willing. Our people are the Arab nation's great model leading its road and journey toward its purposeful goals. Despite the circumstances and complications of what happened in August 1995 and the obstructive stands by those with premeditated intentions and defeated hopes to block our effort to achieve the crossing, the Iraqi people's historic stand on the referendum day and the actions of their state agencies and leadership, each within his field and to the extent of his ability, established a firm and great bridgehead for a hoped-for crossing that positively affects our people's economic, social, political, and security living conditions in accordance with the meaning of the Koranic verse: "Who provides them with food against hunger, and with security against fear of danger." In August 1995, those with premeditated intentions stirred up dust about Iraq's commitment toward the unjust UN Security Council resolutions and some evil, weak heads entertained illusions and defeated hopes, seeking the devil's help to achieve their objectives of harming the great Iraqi people and prolonging the blockade under various pretexts.

Despite all this, and although we despised and were disgusted by their acts, we once again instructed those concerned—each in his own field—to do their best to respond to the legal requests that are part of the relevant resolutions, hoping to end the stories of the evil ones, or, at least, to reduce the dust that was kicked up in a premeditated manner, in order to allow those who have no premeditated intentions to see better so that we can find our appropriate way and the right time and place of the crossing, God willing.

The Iraqi people will view each step which implies good intentions and sound, balanced, and legal views regarding the benign implications of the UN Security Council resolutions and their implementation—as well as those who adopt such stands—with appreciation and respect, and will increase their curses against all those who have premeditated intentions.

The coming months will be the best proof of these steps, actions, and stands, each in its own field and direction. May God lead our steps on the right path. God is great.

Greetings and a salute to the zealous sons of Arabism and the Arab armies.

Glory to the Arab nation's martyrs.

Greetings and glory to Iraq, to the army of Arabism, the army of 6 January, the army of the Mother of Battles, the glorious al-Qadisiyah, the army of the 1941 Revolution, the July 1958 Revolution, the July 1968 Revolution, and the army of Palestine and holy Jerusalem.

Long live Palestine, a free Arab.

Glory to the martyrs. God is great, God is great; and ignominy to the lowly ones.

Defense Minister Issues Statement on Army Day

JN0601120496 Baghdad INA in Arabic
1105 GMT 6 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Baghdad, 6 Jan (INA) — Defense Minister Staff General Sultan Hashim Ahmad has asserted that Iraq seeks peace with those who have the same wish, and that Iraq does not attack anyone and does not covet the territory of others. The resources Iraq has are sufficient for supporting all Arabs.

In a statement to AL-QADISIYAH on the 75th anniversary of the valiant Iraqi Army, the defense minister added: This is how Iraq has been since the glorious 17-30 July revolution. The Iranians were the party that declared war and attacked us. In the Mother of Battles, everybody knows that President Saddam Husayn warned the Arabs at the Arab summit that the economic blockade was a kind of war that would enable the Americans to carry out aggressive actions. The Americans declared economic war on Iraq. [passage omitted]

Staff Gen. Sultan Hashim Ahmad said the Iraqi Army is a highly qualified and experienced army, and is one of the best armies. The Iraqi Army gained its experience through war and the blood of the martyrs. It defeated the Iranian Army, which outnumbered it and was better equipped. The units of the 30-state alliance did not dare confront the Iraqi Army face to face. These units withdrew for more than 25 km as the units of the Iraqi Army were approaching in the sectors of the VII Army Corps and in al-Khafaji during the immortal Mother of Battles. [passage omitted]

Saddam Outlines Economic Measures at Cabinet Session

JN0801090996 Baghdad INA in Arabic 0730 GMT 8 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Baghdad, 8 Jan (INA)—President Saddam Husayn has chaired the Council of Ministers' first session for 1996.

During the meeting, his excellency stressed the need to give due consideration to state employees by granting them incentives when making decisions that concern their relations with citizens when they enforce laws or state regulations to collect dues or taxes.

The cabinet discussed a number of proposals inspired by President Saddam Husayn's letter to the cabinet members on 3 December 1995.

The cabinet also discussed other issues, including the maintenance of irrigation and drainage projects and the establishment of an agricultural equipment company. The cabinet made a number of decisions and recommendations on the topics on the agenda.

In his letter to the cabinet members on 3 December, President Saddam Husayn outlined his proposals and visions in this regard. He stressed that among the measures that need to be taken to reduce inflation and high prices and stop the constant search for basic necessities is to keep the situation as it is by curbing government expenditure and stopping the issuance of orders to printing extra banknotes.

Al-Sahhaf Requests Release of Frozen Assets

JN0901145696 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1114 GMT 9 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Baghdad, 9 Jan (INA)—Iraq has demanded the release of $50 million of its assets frozen in Saudi, Bahraini, and Emirian banks in order to pay Iraqi pilgrims' travel expenses and meet the dire demand for more issues of the holy Koran.

This came in the messages which Foreign Minister Muhammad Sa'id al-Sahhaf addressed to UN Secretary General Butrus Butrus-Ghali, Arab League Secretary General 'Ismat 'Abd-al-Majid, and Organization of the Islamic Conference [ICO] Secretary General Hamid Algabid.

Al-Sahhaf said that for several years, the Iraqi people have faced great hardships preventing them from exercising their pilgrimage right, one of the basic five pillars of our tolerant religion. The pilgrimage right is also one of the most important human rights endorsed by the basic human rights list, the Arab League Charter, the rights and duties charter among the accredited states at the 29th UN General Assembly session of 1974, and the declaration on progress and development in the social field adopted at the UN General Assembly's 24th session of 1969.

He added: Last year, Iraq attempted to obtain funds from its frozen assets. However, Iraq's legitimate demands were arbitrarily rejected by the representatives of two states in the Sanctions Committee. This rejection was not based on any provision in the Security Council resolutions.

Al-Sahhaf said tens of thousands of Iraqi citizens wish to perform the pilgrimage in Mecca, and that the Iraqi Government places great importance on the Iraqi citizens' travel to Mecca. He added that the Sanctions Committee's failure to release the demanded sum means that it is deliberately preventing Iraqi citizens from performing the pilgrimage in Mecca this year.

Following are the texts of these messages:

Your Excellency Butrus Butrus-Ghali, UN secretary general, New York

The pilgrimage season for 1416 Hegira will come in 1996 at a time when Iraqis are still facing many difficulties preventing them from exercising the simplest human rights to perform the pilgrimage to the Holy Mosque, which is one of Islam's basic duties.

As you know, Iraq last year attempted to obtain funds from its frozen assets in order to pay the expenses of pilgrimage for the 1415 Hegira season, corresponding to 1995. At the Sanctions Committee's meeting No. 98 on 2 July 1993, Iraq also demanded the partial release of its frozen funds to purchase quantities of paper and printing materials to print the holy Koran and the religious curricula for pupils in Iraq.

However, these legitimate Iraqi demands were arbitrarily rejected by the representatives of two states in the Sanctions Committee. This rejection is not based on any provision in the Security Council resolutions. It is considered a flagrant violation of the basic human rights charter, the Arab League Charter, the rights and duties charter among the accredited states at the 29th UN General Assembly session of 1974, and the declaration on progress and development in the social field adopted at the UN General Assembly's 24th session of 1969.

Therefore, I request that your excellency to exert good offices on behalf of Iraq's recent demand, submitted to the committee established in accordance with Security Council Resolution 661 of 1990, in order to release $50 million of its assets frozen at Saudi, Bahraini, and Emirian banks in order to cover the expenses of the Iraqi pilgrims' travel to the Holy Land [Saudi Arabia] and meet the dire need to publish the holy Koran.

Tens of thousands of Iraqi citizens wish to perform the pilgrimage to Mecca. The Iraqi Government attaches great importance to the Iraqi citizens' travel to Mecca. The sanctions Committee's failure to release the demanded sum means that it is deliberately preventing Iraqi citizens from performing the pilgrimage to Mecca this year, and consequently preventing them from performing a divine duty which is a basic pillar of their tolerant religion.

Awaiting the results of your good offices, please accept due appreciation and respect.

[Signed] Muhammad Sa'id al-Sahhaf, foreign minister of the Republic of Iraq

[Dated] Baghdad, on 17 Sha'ban 1416 Hegira, corresponding to 8 January 1996 [passage omitted]

[Baghdad INA in Arabic at 1114 GMT on 9 January carries similar messages sent by Iraqi Foreign Minister Muhammad Sa'id al-Sahhaf to Arab League Secretary General 'Ismat 'Abd-al-Majid and OIC Secretary General Hamid Algabid]

Al-Sahhaf Comments on Jordan's al-Kabariti Remarks

JN0801160896 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1320 GMT 8 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Baghdad, 8 Jan (INA) — Foreign Minister Muhammad Sa'id al-Sahhaf today reiterated Iraq's adherence to the rules of mutual respect and noninterference in the domestic affairs of others in its relations with all Arab countries. In a statement to the IRAQI NEWS AGENCY today commenting on statements attributed to Jordanian Foreign Minister 'Abd-al-Karim al-Kabariti, in which al-Kabariti spoke about some domestic affairs of the Republic of Iraq, al-Sahhaf said: We hold our Jordanian brothers in great esteem and we respect their national choices inside their country.

He added: For some time now, we have been following statements by 'Abd-al-Karim al-Kabariti, foreign minister of sisterly Jordan, in which he spoke about the domestic affairs of the Republic of Iraq by talking about the human suffering of our people as a result of the unjust blockade that has been imposed on Iraq for more than five years.

The Iraqi foreign minister said: At the outset, I would like to ask: How many times has al-Kabariti visited Iraq so as to acquaint himself with its situation and get a realistic, honest impression about it? Al-Sahhaf said al-Kabariti does not know anything about Iraq. Al-Kabariti has never visited Iraq to get a first-hand idea about our country and people.

The Iraqi foreign minister added: Everybody knows that some well-known foreign sides exploit humanitarian issues for political purposes. Regarding Iraq, we have noticed in recent years in light of the five-year unjust blockade that some people who have premeditated political intentions are using the humanitarian issues that resulted from the unjust blockade as a cover for tendentious political stands against Iraq.

The Iraqi foreign minister said Iraq was careful in its contacts with its brothers in Arab countries and friendly states to warn of the seriousness of the schemes of those who have premeditated intentions. Those people cover up their political purposes by humanitarian issues and weeping over the humanitarian suffering of our people.

In this respect, the Iraqi foreign minister reiterated his call on those who have good intentions to beware those who have premeditated intentions because they harbor evil for everybody.

The foreign minister warned against the dangers inherent in using the slogans of democracy to interfere in others' affairs. He said: For those who have premeditated intentions, the slogan of democracy has become a manner and tool to interfere in the internal affairs of others. They distort the concepts and approach of democracy in order to serve their foreign political purposes. Then, they allow themselves to interfere in the affairs of other societies and countries and draw up for them their way of life and political, social, economic, and cultural system.

Al-Sahhaf drew the attention of those who harbor good intentions to the dangers posed by the means and tools of those who have premeditated purposes and distort the slogan of democracy. In this regard, he emphasized: The great Iraqi people, who are the owners of a an ancient human civilization, have chosen upon their free national will their political, social, economic, and cultural system. They built this system with the relentless efforts of their sincere sons and large masses sine 17-30 July 1968. All our people took to the streets once again on the Great March Day on 15 October 1995, thus asserting their free, national choice of their leader President Saddam Husayn and his political, social, economic, and cultural system through free voting in a general, direct referendum.

He asked: Do those who have premeditated intentions dare to lie about our people and homeland following the Great March Day? The essence of democracy is people.

The minister went on to say: If we talk, for instance, about sisterly Jordan in a way that is unacceptable to our Iraqi people, then this means that we do not respect our people. Likewise, if some individuals talked about a national and pan-Arab Aab system that has faith in and safeguards the national, pan-Arab constants of its people, then this means that these individuals do not respect their people.

Regarding statements by well known people that every local area with a special character should become a federation or a confederation, the minister said: This means that the whole world should turn into federations or confederations. This applies to Jordan. The special characters of the Circasians, Palestinians, Chechens, and Bedouins and others in sisterly Jordan require, according to the argument of these people, that Jordan should become a federation or confederation.

Concluding his statements, the minister confirmed that Iraq adheres to the rules of mutual respect, solidarity, and fruitful cooperation for the sake of serving the interests of our peoples and the glorious Arab nation. He asserted that these sound and well-founded rules require that all should abide by them.

Peace Delegation Returns; Syria Rejects Proposal

TA0701062196 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 0500 GMT 7 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Israeli delegation to the negotiations with Syria is returning home to report to Prime Minister Shim'on Peres and Foreign Minister Ehud Baraq on the two weeks of talks at the Wye Plantation in Maryland. The chief negotiator, Uri Savir, says the Israeli team is returning with an answer that the Syrians are a partner interested in achieving real peace in 1996. With that, Savir said problems remains and more than one round of talks will be necessary to bridge the gaps.

[Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew at 0600 GMT on 7 January adds: "Savir divulged that, answering a question posed by the Israeli delegation regarding the substance of peace, the Syrian delegation did not give many negative answers, but on the other hand failed to provide satisfactory answers."]

U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher is to arrive in Jerusalem Wednesday, and will then travel to Damascus. The next stage of the negotiations will be decided upon during the Christopher mission. The assessment is that the Israeli and Syrian teams will meet again during the last week of this month. The discussions will again take place at the Wye Plantation, although this time the delegations might also include experts to discuss details in certain issues.

At the negotiations, the Syrian rejected an Israeli proposal to set up a direct link between the two embassies in Washington. The Israeli delegation raised the idea as a confidence-building measure, but the Syrians evaded the proposal.

Briefing Views Syrian, Iranian Strategic Aims

TA0701163496 Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew 1500 GMT 7 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Major General Moshe Ya'alon, the head of the IDF [Israel Defense Forces] Intelligence Branch, said today that he agrees with the assessment voiced by his predecessor, Uri Sagi, that the Syrian president has made a strategic decision to reach a peace agreement with Israel. Maj. Gen. Ya'alon presented the IDF Intelligence Branch's annual assessment to the cabinet today. He asserted that all the signs from Damascus are indicative of President Hafiz al-Asad's readiness to reach an arrangement. Our political correspondent Udi Segal reports:

[Begin Segal recording] Two major trends featured in the yearly intelligence report presented by Maj. Gen. Ya'alon to the cabinet this morning. On one hand, the peace process is gathering momentum: Many Arab countries in the Middle East, North Africa, and the Persian Gulf are showing greater openness toward Israel, the process is proceeding well, and even irregular or grave developments have not jarred its foundations. On the other hand, the military buildup in the region continues, particularly on the part of Iran, which is trying to gain possession of nuclear weapons and will be capable of producing nonconventional weapons in five years. Iran poses the major threat, according to Brigadier Gen. Ya'aqov 'Amidror, deputy head of the IDF Intelligence Branch. 'Amidror, however, also presented the cabinet with the encouraging assessment that Israel does not currently face the threat of war.

As for the circle of states closer to Israel, the annual intelligence assessment notes al-Asad's decision to achieve peace and the signs from Damascus indicating that the Syrian leader is determined to reach an agreement with Israel on his own terms. Incidentally, Uri Savir, Itamar Rabinovich, and Yo'el Singer are now briefing Prime Minister Shim'on Peres on the latest round of talks in Maryland. The intelligence officials mentioned the alliance between Iran and Syria, which remains intact, mainly as a result of the two countries' fear of Iraq.

[Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew at 1500 GMT on 7 January reports that "after Secretary of State Christopher completes his talks in the region in two weeks, the cabinet will hold a wide-ranging debate on the negotiations with Syria. In Foreign Ministry deliberations held today, it was decided that Israel must not withdraw to the 4 June 1967 borderline at the foothills of the Golan Heights."]

As for the Palestinian issue, the intelligence chief noted the fact that the timetable set by the agreement had been met and most of the commitments stipulated by it had been implemented. 'Arafat has managed to take control of the Gaza Strip and succeeded in exercising his authority in the West Bank a short time after the IDF troops pulled out of the Palestinian cities. 'Arafat's rule is stable, and he is making an effort to handle the election campaign in the territories in an orderly and efficient manner.

The cabinet ministers described the annual assessment as very optimistic and said that it gave the Middle East process a chance. [end recording]

Savir: Syria Ready for Accord Prior to Elections

TA0701193796 Jerusalem Israel Television Channel 1 Network in Hebrew 1800 GMT 7 Jan 96

[Studio discussion between anchor Hayim Yavin and political correspondent Nisim Mish'al]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Yavin] Syria agrees not to link an agreement with Israel to the completion of the peace process with the Palestinians. The Israeli team to the talks with the Syrians briefed Prime Minister Shim'on Peres this evening on the agreements reached at the Wye Plantation deliberations. Prior to the report, the participants celebrated the birthday of Uri Savir, head of the delegation. Our political correspondent Nisim Mish'al was there.

[Begin recording] [Mish'al] Shim'on Peres, the guest of honor's political father, praised the man whom he had raised. The political leadership, the chief of staff, and the head of Military Intelligence succeeded in surprising Uri Savir, who arrived at his birthday party straight from Washington. Savir came to report on the talks with the Syrians but, overcome, he left the report on the talks for a closed meeting with the prime minister, the foreign minister, and the chief of staff, which was held later. Can you point to any progress or flexibility in the Syrian position?

[Peres] I can, but I will hold back for the time being. I must first report to the cabinet and other venues. I cannot start with the television. There is always time to report to the public.

[Mish'al] What should viewers know about the negotiations? Where do they stand? It is all hazy.

[Peres] That is not so bad. Negotiations have started. As I have said, the opening was reasonable. Most of the problems are still before us.

[Mish'al] Have we made any progress on substance?

[Peres] Negotiations are also a matter of substance. [end recording]

[Jerusalem Israel Television Channel 2 Network in Hebrew at 1800 GMT on 7 January adds: "Prime Minister Shim'on Peres believes Syrian President al-Asad is interested in reaching an agreement with Israel prior to the Israeli elections. That is Peres' impression following the report he heard from Uri Savir, head of the negotiating team."]

[Yavin] Nisim, I understand you did not succeed in extracting much information from the prime minister. What did Savir bring with him from the Wye Plantation?

[Mish'al] Besides the atmosphere and the colorful wrapping, the most important thing is Syria's readiness to reach an agreement with Israel unconnected to an agreement with the Palestinians. We have to renew the negotiations on the permanent settlement with the Palestinians in May 1996. The Syrians are ready to reach an agreement with us prior to the completion of the three years of negotiations with the Palestinians — in other words, to separate the negotiations with them from those with the Palestinians. That is definitely an interesting point, worthy of consideration, about the Syrian stand.

[Yavin] That is a change in the Syrian position.

[Mish'al] Something else worth noting in that context is that Savir and Itamar Rabinovich reported slight progress on the issue of nature of the peace. The Syrians are prepared to discuss tourism and the opening of embassies but on one condition: a full Israeli withdrawal from the Golan Heights.

[Yavin] Are the Americans providing only the wrapping or is their involvement much more substantial?

[Mish'al] What was very striking in the talks was the extent to which the Americans intervened. Christopher participated in the dinner, the State Department spokesman issued the joint announcement, and Christopher is arriving here on 10 January. All that shows that the Americans are interested in Israeli-Syrian peace for their own interests. There was another interesting point. In the second week of talks, Hizballah moderated its activities in south Lebanon. That should also be associated with the Americans' intensive activity with Syria.

[Yavin] In short, Christopher is arriving on Wednesday [10 January]. What is the schedule?

[Mish'al] Christopher wants one thing: to expand the talks. Following his visit, he will announce the resumption of the talks in Maryland in two weeks. This time, officers and economists will participate, and I believe the U.S. bridging proposals will be presented.

Further on Peace Team Report on Syria Track Talks

TA0801070696 Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew 0500 GMT 8 Jan 96

[Report by political correspondent Udi Segal]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Tunisia is expected to announce the opening of an interests office in Israel in the coming days, following pressure by U.S. Vice President Al Gore, who made his visit to Tunis conditional on such an announcement. This move is apparently only the beginning, because Syria has given its blessing to an actual U.S. undertaking with Arab countries that will lead to the establishment of ties between these countries and Israel within the framework of a comprehensive peace arrangement, the center of which will be the Jerusalem-Damascus peace accord. This news was imparted to Prime Minister Shim'on Peres by the negotiating team last night. The undertaking will include countries such as Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Yemen, Bahrain, and Qatar, as well as other countries whose rapprochement with Israel has so far not been endorsed by Syria.

Thus Peres' concept of a new Middle East is taking shape with Syria's consent and blessing. The Israeli team views this development as evidence of progress on the issue of the definition of comprehensive peace. Last night the team, headed by Uri Savir, informed Shim'on Peres that Syria wishes to attain peace this year, prior to the Israeli elections. [passage omitted]

Rabinovich says the talks, including those on the substance of peace, are making slow progress. The Syrians agreed to discuss regional economic projects, but gave incomplete answers. U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher's visit to the region is supposed to produce a more detailed definition of the negotiations' objective, or rather, of the peace treaty's components. For instance, Israel wants the economic cooperation chapter to be an integral part of the accord, but al-Asad has not yet responded. [passage omitted]

The issue of south Lebanon has not been brought up officially, but there is an unwritten agreement that quiet should be maintained in that area. So far this agreement has not been violated by Hizballah terrorists.

Peres: Syrian Answers on Peace 'Insufficient'

TA0801120396 Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew 1100 GMT 8 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] U.S. Secretary of State William Perry said in Jerusalem today that Washington will agree to send troops for a Golan Heights peace monitoring force as part of a peace treaty between Israel and Syria. Perry met a short time ago with Prime Minister Shim'on Peres. They decided on the start of deliberations on defense and strategic ties with states in the region which are partners to the comprehensive peace. Our political correspondent Udi Segal reports:

[Begin recording] [Segal] The answers Israel received from Syria on normalization and the nature of the peace are still insufficient, Prime Minister Peres told Secretary Perry. Peres expressed the hope that the Syrian positions on these issues will be clarified during Warren Christopher's visit to the region. We asked Peres what has been the main achievement of the Maryland talks.

[Peres] This time we discussed the other side of the coin in great deal with the Syrian delegation, that is the character of normalization and economic ties, but we did not receive answers on everything. I assume that these will be clarified during Secretary Christopher's visit. [passage omitted]

[Segal] Peres and Perry agreed to start deliberations on the possibility of strategic defense ties among states in the region that join the overall peace. We did not discuss a defense pact, but expanding the basis for achieving peace and defense, Perry said. He reported to Peres on the satisfaction of Saudi Arabia and Oman with the progress in the peace process, and reiterated the assessment that Saudi Arabia will form relations with Israel when peace is reached with Damascus. [end recording]

Perry also reported to Peres that the United States will grant Israel $200 million to continue the development of the Arrow missile project.

Peres on Ties With U.S., Troops on Golan

TA0801155896 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 1500 GMT 8 Jan 96

[Report by David Ze'ev]

[FBIS Transcribed Excerpt] [passage omitted] The U.S. secretary of defense also said he and Prime Minister Peres agreed to initiate a joint study to determine the best ways of achieving security along with peace. The study would start in a matter of weeks.

[Begin Peres recording] Looking really hard, on the one hand, to move ahead in the direction of peace, and on the other hand, how to guarantee the securities of the parties concerned. And as far as Israel is concerned, we feel very appreciative by the existing relations between the United States and the State of Israel generally, and between the Department of Defense of the United States and the Defense Ministry of Israel in particular. [end recording]

The prime minister said he did not object to American arms sales to other countries in the region, if they become part of a peace coalition against extremism.

[Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew at 1500 GMT on 8 January adds: "Prime Minister Shim'on Peres said he would not ask the United States to deploy soldiers on the Golan and will favor stationing a multinational force there, just like in the Sinai. In his opinion, such a force would ensure the peace, which is the guarantee Israeli public opinion needs."]

Peres Offers 'Limited Withdrawal' From Lebanon

NC0801171396 Paris AFP in English
1655 GMT 8 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Jerusalem, Jan 8 (AFP) — Israel has offered a limited withdrawal from its "security zone" in south Lebanon to test the Lebanese army's ability to keep border security, Prime Minister Shim'on Peres said Monday [8 January] for the first time publicly.

"We have suggested to the Lebanese to try at least in one part of the security zone to become responsible for security," Peres told a press conference.

Israel has occupied the 850 square kilometre (530 sq mile) zone patrolled by 1,000 soldiers inside the Lebanese border since 1985 to try to prevent cross-border attacks on northern Israel.

Peres said Israel could not give up the whole of the zone before testing the Lebanese army's ability to halt guerrilla attacks. "We cannot make an error," he said.

It was the first time Israel has publicly considered any kind of test withdrawal from south Lebanon. The coordinator of Israeli activities there, Uri Lubrani, has rejected the idea in the past, saying the Jewish state "does not go in for experiments or tests."

Peres did not say how Lebanon reacted to the proposal, but in Beirut Lebanese President Ilyas al-Hirawi said Monday that his country was willing to guarantee security at the international border if Israel withdrew all its troops from the security zone.

"Let Israel pull out and Lebanon will guarantee security at our internationally recognised borders," al-Hirawi said.

Meanwhile, guerrillas rocketed Israeli positions in the security zone on Monday without causing casualties. Twenty-five soldiers were killed last year in guerrilla attacks spearheaded by the Iranian-backed Hizballah.

Peres: Economic Issues Discussed With Syrians

TA0801175296 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew
1605 GMT 8 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Prime Minister Shim'on Peres today told Labor's Knesset faction that the economic aspect of the peace agreement was seriously discussed in the talks with the Syrians and that it was agreed that the peace with them and with Lebanon must become a comprehensive and regional peace. Referring to the possibility of early elections, Peres said: I do not concern myself with it, but with the question of promoting peace. Yo'el Nir reports:

[Begin recording] [Nir] Peres opened with a report about the relations with the Palestinians. Naturally, he did not mention the elimination of The Engineer, but hinted at it from Israel's point of view by saying: When I saw the mass funeral in Gaza, I thanked God in my heart that the Palestinian Police are the ones handling it rather than us, and my conclusion was that this is the natural order of affairs, that Palestinians should handle the Palestinians.

Peres barely had anything new to say about the negotiations with Syria, but he nevertheless intimated at the problems between the lines. The simplistic formula of land for peace does no longer apply, he said, because land is given while peace must be received; land is tangible, while peace is a promise. Within this context, he noted that in the talks today with U.S. Secretary of Defense William Perry, the Americans agreed with us that the peace must be based on Israel's self-defense capability and that the IDF [Israel Defense Forces] will be the one that will safeguard it.

He then proceeded to utter what might become his public relations line in the future: The problem is not with the Golan Heights and a withdrawal from it, but with putting an end to the wars and making peace in the region.

[Peres] In my opinion, the problem is not just the Golan Heights. The problem is that an opportunity has been created to put an end to the wars in the Middle East, and I would not that easily say no to such an opportunity. This is a very serious opportunity. Obviously, we must not even for a minute forget the security issues, but we must think about the chance of peace, which also is a component of the peace.

[Nir] Peres added: I do not know whether the negotiations with the Syrians will be wrapped up before the elections or will continue after them. [passage omitted] [end recording]

Dayan: U.S. Must Tell Syria Compromise on Border

TA0901114996 Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew
1100 GMT 9 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Deputy Foreign Minister Eli Dayan has said that U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher must deliver a clear message to Syria, saying that Israel will be unable to sign a peace agreement unless al-Asad makes a compromise on the border issue. Dayan said: Israel cannot accept the 4 June 1967 line, and demands that modifications be made to the international border as well. Our political correspondent Udi Segal says that Dayan made the remarks in the wake Secretary Christopher's expected tour of Israel and Syria, which starts tomorrow.

Peres Comments After Meeting Christopher

TA1001122496 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1105 GMT 10 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The meeting between Prime Minister Shim'on Peres and the Israeli negotiating team with U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher has ended. At the end of the meeting, Peres and Christopher answered journalists' questions. Our political correspondent Shlomo Raz reports from outside the Prime Minister's Office.

[Raz] The most interesting message from the meeting here, beyond the ordinary high-flown talk about a good start and about the wish to promote the negotiations, is the fact that the timetable — the upcoming elections in Israel and the United States — has definitely started to play a role in the negotiations. One should listen very carefully to Prime Minister Shim'on Peres, who linked the timetable and Israel's plans to accelerate the negotiations.

[Begin Peres recording] Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad, just like us, the Israeli Government, and our American friends, decided to make a supreme effort not just to advance the negotiations but also to accelerate them. We know that we do not have too many months at our disposal. The elections in Israel will be held in October, and then our mandate will expire. Therefore, without a very intense effort it is doubtful that we will succeed. We are interested in a serious effort. [end recording]

[Raz] In reply to another question, Peres repeated, in both Hebrew and English so that there would be no misunderstanding, that the elections must be held on 29 October 1996, unless conditions make it impossible for the government to continue in power. My interpretation is that the prime minister wants serious negotiations rather than some political trick; he does not want to use the negotiations with Syria or any similar trick to bring the elections forward. [passage omitted]

[Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew at 1200 GMT on 10 January adds: "Our political correspondent Shlomo Raz reports that Itamar Rabinovich, Israel's ambassador to the United States, who is a member of the team negotiating with Syria, said that the Syrians must understand the limitations posed by the time remaining until the elections in Israel. Rabinovich said that at the present rate, the negotiating process would not be completed within the time remaining until the elections."]

Savir, Beilin on Expectations of Christopher Visit

TA1101063796 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 0500 GMT 11 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Visiting U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher, in Israel on his latest Middle East shuttle, will fly to Damascus today for talks with Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad. The meeting is aimed at keeping up the momentum in negotiations between Israel and Syria. Last night, Secretary of State Christopher said he would call on Syrian leaders to speed up the peace process. The secretary of state is due back in Israel tomorrow. Prime Minister Peres said Israel, Syria, and the U.S. are making every effort to speed up negotiations in the time remaining before the next Israeli elections. Talks between the two countries are due to resume before the end of the month, and, as we hear in this interview, Israel's chief negotiator with Syria Uri Savir thinks there is reason for optimism:

[Begin recording] [Savir] I think now that we have decided to put formalities and modalities aside, it should be relatively easy to agree on the type of expert negotiations that will also allow to expand some of the issues, because it was decided by President al-Asad and Prime Minister Peres to have simultaneous talks on all issues — on normalization, economic relations, on security — and I hope we'll see such a round, a constructive round, by the end of the month in Maryland. There are many obstacles left, and I think it really depends on the determination of the leaders to overcome these obstacles, because if you look at the peace here and you look back at the obstacles, they look very small, and maybe it's with a sight to the future that will allow us to move faster, which I think is what our people in the region expects. But there are tough negotiations lying ahead of us.

[Unidentified correspondent] Do we expect a summit between Peres and al-Asad in the near future? Wouldn't that be the biggest icebreaker and allow for the negotiations to advance quickly?

[Savir] It's something actually natural in any peace process that the ultimate decisionmakers have to meet, have to make decisions, negotiate between them. It's not an Israeli request; it's not a Syrian request. It's something that must be a natural part of this process, and I hope it will happen in not too long a future. It really will impact on the pace of negotiations. [end recording]

[Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew at 0500 GMT on 11 January carries a related live interview with Minister Yosi Beilin by 'Oded Ben-'Ami and Mikhal Gazit. Asked whether he has doubts about the prospects of the negotiations with Syria, Beilin answers: "I am willing to give up some of my doubts every day. The main problem, however, is that even the sincere U.S. willingness to delve deeply into the negotiations — as expressed in Secretary Christopher's present visit — and the new atmosphere and music emanating from Syria's direction are happening in 1996. Had it occurred two years ago or even one year ago, I could have been much more optimistic. We have little time: less than a year, some nine or 10 months. I still find it very difficult to be optimistic and to believe that at the present rate and on the present level we will be able to achieve peace with Syria. Christopher's upcoming visit to Damascus may perhaps provide us with an additional signal regarding their willingness to build new and more intensive parameters, thus enabling us to see whether there is a real chance for a breakthrough this year."]

Baraq Comments on Wye Talks, 'Ayyash Killing

TA0501203996 Jerusalem Israel Television Channel 1 Network in Hebrew 1800 GMT 5 Jan 96

[Interview with Foreign Minister Ehud Baraq by anchor Yisra'el Segal and Arab affairs correspondent Ehud Ya'ari in the studio — live]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Segal] Secretary of State Christopher is coming to our region. This is the next step. What will follow?

[Baraq] I believe that during his visit, he will try to determine how much rope Damascus and Jerusalem are willing to give to continue the negotiations. Earlier, Uri Savir described the issues that were raised. Issues such as water, terror, or security arrangements have not yet been raised, not even as feelers. I believe that after Christopher's visit to the region, it will be possible to continue with the same team, perhaps expanded a little to include economic experts and army generals. In the future, we will have to sum up this round of talks and see what comes next.

[Segal] Dennis Ross was being undiplomatically candid when he said that what was attained in these six days was not attained in years.

[Baraq] There were years before, as Mr. Rabinovich said. These six days provided us with an important positive step forward, but it is only part of a very long journey that will be complicated and which, at this stage, cannot be accompanied by deadlines or a sense of urgency about its conclusion.

[Segal] Isn't it possible that the killing of Yahya 'Ayyash will disrupt the elections and the timetable of the peace process between us and the Palestinians?

[Baraq] The man was the worst kind of murderer, and I believe you will give the details later.

[Segal] We will, but I am asking you, as foreign minister, about the political aspect.

[Baraq] I am certain that the war on terrorism is a shared Israeli and Palestinian Authority [PA] interest. I would not want to comment on the incident, and I do not believe I should. As a rule, I do not believe I should comment on whether we did it or not, but the fact that he was killed will, in the long run, save blood and human lives. That is enough.

[Segal] We all know he was a killer. We all wanted his blood. Looking back on it, however, isn't there a fear that this may have political consequences?

[Baraq] I am not familiar with the list of Yahya 'Ayyash's enemies and rivals. A determined and uncompromising war on terrorism that kills civilians is certainly very important, and I am addressing this to the PA as well.

[Segal] Let us return to the U.S. talks. Will the level of participants be raised in the next round?

[Baraq] I do not think so. I believe that after Christopher's visit, the same team will meet. It may be expanded with economic experts and army officers.

[Segal] Will the talks continue in the United States in any event?

[Baraq] Yes. I believe there is still a long way to go before we begin to know whether there is a breakthrough.

[Segal] Let us try to map out the achievements so far. I gather, and correct me if I am wrong, that we have begun to discuss economic issues, regional peace, and tourism. What does this mean?

[Baraq] The very fact that the parties are talking to each other openly and freely about the characteristics of peace is important. We never made it this far before.

[Segal] Could you give us a specific example?

[Baraq] Once there is talk about the nature of peace, and each party presents its view — and we were able to tell the Syrians that we see the opening of not only borders and embassies but also trade, transportation, communications, and economic agreements and activities, including joint, bilateral activities — and hears the other side's reactions and remarks, which would not be appropriate for me to disclose, it constitutes progress, because we have not done this before. We are discussing the comprehensiveness of the agreement and can speak of having the agreement opened up to include not only Israel and Syria but also having the opportunity of including an agreement with Lebanon. We are talking about the arrangements or structure required for North African or

Gulf countries to join in later on. When these issues are discussed in the framework of a regional view, when in fact we are speaking of a way to end the era of war, this is very important.

At the same time, I would not like us to get carried away. Decades of conflict are not solved in six days, a visit by the secretary of state, or another six days in Maryland or elsewhere. This is a very long process and, I believe, it will take weeks before we know whether we have enough understandings on the various issues to be able to enter detailed negotiations, which are the peace negotiations.

[Ya'ari] Still, reports from Washington — which do not reach the Israeli press from out of nowhere, although not necessarily from you — are very optimistic. Have you seen any change in the Syrian stand on any issue or point that could narrow the gap a little?

[Baraq] There is reason for cautious optimism regarding the talks in the United States. Such a dialogue and clarifications have never been held before. We have not yet come closer to really understanding each other's positions. I must also say that our team there — Uri Savir, Itamar Rabinovich, Yo'el Singer, and other very talented and serious people — is doing an excellent job. It will take time. It is impossible to conduct negotiations with deadlines to meet, with a feeling that we must attain an agreement at all costs, and under pressure from the media or public opinion. If we want the talks to be held responsibly, we must remain cool and attentive to the details and to the other side.

[Ya'ari] You sat through these discussions before. You are No. 2 in the Israeli cabinet today, and you sat with General al-Shihabi, the second in command in Syria. The level is lower today. Will it be raised after Christopher's visit?

[Baraq] Look, the nature of the talks held today with the Syrians is deeper and more intimate than those in which I participated. I am briefed every night and I know: It was impossible to hold this intimate and open nature of exchanges 18 months ago without the talks getting stuck for hours whenever the other side expressed a reservation. In this respect, there definitely is a change. It may be that even after the gaps have been narrowed, the future will lead us to new gaps that can be bridged only by more senior levels. We will deal with it when we reach that stage, if it comes.

[Segal] Was the word withdrawal — that taboo word — heard in the discussions?

[Baraq] We are not discussing the issue of withdrawal at this stage, and rightfully so. We know their stand and they know ours. Basically, it is the formula of the depth of withdrawal equals the depth of peace. My formula is a little more complex. It says: The depth of withdrawal will match the quality of peace and the strength of the security and early warning arrangements. It is very good that we can now discuss normalization and the nature of a comprehensive peace. We still have to deal with the issues of water and terror. We may do so under one of the banners that the Syrians find more convenient, because they tend to break the issues down into normalization, security arrangements, timetables, and the stages and depth of withdrawal. We will have to gradually find out the stands of both parties without trying to determine any one thing ahead of the others. This is the key to progress.

[Segal] So there is a kind of game there. The parties are sitting and discussing those parts of the glasses that are half full and ignoring the empty halves — that is, the disagreements that are still very deep regarding the nature and essence of the withdrawal and the related issue of the borders, redeployment, and security arrangements.

[Baraq] The unique thing is that they are discussing all the glasses at the same time. There are many issues on the agenda. Each party describes how full or how empty each glass is from its point of view, and you can imagine that they differ. Still, the real progress lies in the fact that they do not stop the talks when a disagreement is encountered and allow us to map out the situation of all the glasses, with each party getting a better understanding of the other side's perspective, stands, and sensitivities. After all, what are we missing? We are missing the answer to the question about the extent to which the Syrians are ready to have full peace — not as a headline or a book cover but as a fact on the ground that will be implemented quickly and irreversibly. If we have this, we can talk; if not, we should know this and reconsider our next step.

[Ya'ari] But there is also the time element. If I understand the government stand correctly, it says that the Syrians must realize that if they are not in a hurry, there may be early elections in Israel. This would mean that the move with them will have to wait, and they may have to talk to a new government — perhaps a Labor government — later on. Does this influence the Syrians?

[Baraq] I think it was never said this way, and I believe to say so would be a grave mistake from our point of view as well. It would be wrong to set dates or tie Syria's considerations to our elections considerations. Labor can win the elections with or without an agreement with Syria that will stand the test of our demands regarding the security arrangements and which we will find good and worthy. We may find ourselves in a discussion in which we say: We are coming from a position of power and self-confidence and are discussing an arrangement with Syria. If we can reach an agreement that meets our demands, we will bring it to the public to decide. If we find that it is impossible to reach such an agreement, then we will know that, too. We must not tie this to elections. It could boomerang against us both in the negotiations and on the domestic front.

Jordan's King Husayn Pays Visit

Makes Statement Upon Arrival

TA1001134196 Jerusalem Channel 2 Television Network in Hebrew 1250 GMT 10 Jan 96

[Speech by King Husayn at Sede Dov Airport in Tel Aviv — live, in English]

[FBIS Translated Text] On behalf of all my colleagues from Jordan, who have accompanied me today on this visit to Israel, I would like to say how happy we are to have the opportunity to be with our friends, our partners in building and laying the foundations for a comprehensive peace in this region. It is indeed a pleasure for me to bring with me the feelings of my people, our commitment to the cause of peace, and to the chance for our peoples to build together a future that is worthy of them.

We have come a long way in a short space of time, Mr. Prime Minister. I have always had the greatest respect and admiration for you, and I have always known your commitment to peace. If we have lost a partner in making peace in this region — in his memory, and as our duty, our sacred duty, invoke God's blessings on us to enable us to continue and to see this whole region living the dawn of peace and opportunities, and hope, and life, and dignity, and security for all the children of Abraham and for all times to come. We are indeed fortunate, Sir, to have the opportunity to face this challenge and, God willing, our efforts will succeed. I would like to say how happy I am to be here with you today and to convey our deepest appreciation for the very, very warm welcome we have received. And to the people of Israel and to the people of Jordan, to all the peoples of this region, may God's peace and mercy be upon you.

Gives Address at Medical Center

TA1001165096 Jerusalem Israel Television Channel 1 Network in Hebrew 1445 GMT 10 Jan 96

[Address by Jordan's King Husayn at the Sourasky Medical Center in Tel Aviv — live, in English; some passages indistinct due to superimposed Hebrew summary]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] My friend, my fellow peacemaker, Prime Minister of the State of Israel; Le'a Rabin, sister and friend; Your Excellencies; dear friends:

I am so moved and so touched by the warmth with which we have been received here today — myself, the prime minister of Jordan, and all the members of the Jordanian family who have come with me on this visit to Tel Aviv. The first official visit to this city which I saw from the air flying back from the United States of America following the ratification of the Washington Declaration and the beginning of our effort, our combined effort, to establish between our countries and our peoples peace, God willing, for all times to come.

Peace between human beings, peace between the descendants of the children of Abraham, peace between cousins, peace between people who deserve to enjoy it, cherish it, see it mature and grow, and give them the opportunities to put together their talents and abilities, to build together a future worthy of them for all times to come. And to continue it to a better future for mankind in this universe.

Yes, I had memories as I flew over today of this city, of the first flight, and indeed of the conversation I had with my partner in Washington, and before Washington, and after Washington, in creating peace between the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and the State of Israel, the late Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin. I remember our conversation from the air and our meetings, and it has become now almost a normal event for us to fly over along with the rest of the world, flying westwards and coming back. But the memories of that first sight of the city, of that first flight, will be with me for the rest of my life. I would like to seize this opportunity to thank the people of Tel Aviv for their most warm welcome. Let me be very frank about it, I felt at home and amongst friends. It is indeed a pleasure for me to be here today. It is moving in many ways. The occasion, the experience, the visit. Seeing Le'a and meeting the Rabin family. The prime minister who is trying to continue in the same courageous way, to reach the end that Yitzhaq Rabin died trying to reach. It is not the end but the beginning for a comprehensive peace in the region. And in this wonderful facility with the dedication of so many friends, [words indistinct] visiting two Jordanians, a Cobra pilot who crashed and now lives here among family and friends, receiving the best treatment he could receive anywhere in the world, in a new way of treating such cases, and having as well the courage himself and the determination to get better, God willing, to completely recover from his terrible accident. And another Jordanian, this time a victim of peacekeeping, from the Jordanian unit that served with the United Nations in Bosnia, received excellent surgery and who is recovering as well as his other colleague.

It is difficult for me sometimes to imagine how far we have come. We have come a long way. Together. To this moment, being here together to honor the memory of a great man [words indistinct]. And I do agree with you, Prime Minister, in suggesting that fighting wars is much easier than having the vision, having the commitment, and making that commitment totally to attain for people beyond a point in time, all people, a future that is worthy of them with peace and justice and safeguarding their dignity and security and pride. Bringing people together and making a family together. Giving them what is their right. It is so easy to be full of hate and anger and not to see beyond that. But it is unique to be able to see beyond destruction to construction, beyond war to peace, beyond death to life, and to work for it.

I knew Yitzhaq Rabin, I honored him as a friend, as he did me. And regardless of where we were in terms of our positions, attitudes at different times, there was always this mutual respect. And there was, I felt, with him as was the case with me, something rather unique. I had placed myself many times in his position and I believe he did the same. And that is the way to bridge gaps, to lay the foundations for the edifice of peace that will last for all times to come.

We did not deal with each other as politicians do. We agreed and disagreed, we spoke but we knew in my case and in his case exactly where we were going and what we were trying to achieve in [word indistinct], and that the commitment was one and the same. And God helped us to arrive where we did with the help of many Jordanians and many Israelis who believe in peace, believe in life, believe in the rights of all to live in peace and security for generations to come. The right of a child to grow up in an atmosphere of peace, of a mother not to fear for her son going to war, and of a father knowing that his children will have the opportunities he never had. We will tear down the walls that separated human beings from one other, from realizing that we are all the same. The struggle of life is just the same, the ambitions are the same, the hopes are the same. That it is our duty to remove these walls that separate us and to come together, to live together, and to build together. To transcend what happened, towards what must happen and will happen. Here, at this great center for the treatment of human beings, planned by all the dedicated people around whom we have met and those whom we haven't. [Word indistinct] I agree with you Prime Minister, let us hope that they will always be mobilized and let us give them all the help [passage indistinct]. Enjoy peace totally between our two countries and [words indistinct] hopefully within this entire region [words indistinct]. It is a honor for me to be here today [words indistinct], with all of you to honor the memory of my late friend, a memory I shall treasure and cherish till the end of life. God bless you all, and thank you so much for all your kindness. God bless you.

Husayn, Peres Hold News Conference

TA1001171196 Jerusalem Israel Television Channel 1 Network in Hebrew 1605 GMT 10 Jan 96

[Joint news conference by Jordan's Husayn and Prime Minister Shim'on Peres with domestic and foreign correspondents at the Defense Ministry in Tel Aviv — live; in English; italicized passages in Hebrew]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] [Peres] Ladies and gentlemen, the first official visit of His Majesty King Husayn to Tel Aviv, and in a way to Israel, and in a way to the Ministry of Defense which by definition is now becoming a ministry of peace as well. We are cooperating today in order to bring peace no less than in order to keep security for all of our people. The people of Tel Aviv and the country cheered the king and you know the reasons and you know how right we were. Thank you very much Your Majesty. And there will be no statement but we will answer questions one by one.

[Israel Television Channel 1 correspondent Dan Scemama] Your Majesty, I hope you can hear me. I think Jordan is the first Arab country which has a military cooperation with Israel. What are the main goals of Israel and Jordan in the security and defense matters; and if you allow me Your Majesty, one question to the prime minister. *Mr. Prime Minister, after King Husayn's visit here, your meeting with Secretary of State Christopher, and last week's talks between the military officers, could you stand here with Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad in less than a year?*

[Peres] *There is enough room here.* Your Majesty.

[Husayn] Thank you very much indeed for the question and the opportunity to answer it. First of all, I believe the facts speak for themselves. We have a unique peace. We have a total peace between us, and as a result we do not have any observers from the rest of the world, nor do we have any international peace forces. Our soldiers on both sides of our international borders look after this peace and cherish it and defend it. And I believe in the times that are to come, there will be hopefully lots of possibilities when the Orient people can have the opportunity to put their talents and their abilities together to bring about the kind of cooperation and to face the challenges of the future in a most adequate manner, someday, hopefully. And I am very confident of that. Thank you.

[Peres] The gentlemen asked if there is a hope that President al-Asad will join the scene one day in this sort of a meeting. I said there is enough room but we hope that all the 20 Arab heads of state will meet together with us in order to put an end to the war in the Middle East. It is the greatest desire and hope of all of us. Thank you.

[Jordanian television correspondent Murid Hamad] I would like to ask two questions, one to his majesty and one to Prime Minister Peres. The question deals with the nature of the talks that you have had this evening in the ministry here and the prospects of peaceful cooperation that we will have particularly after we have seen today two Jordanian soldiers treated in an Israeli hospital.

[Husayn] Well, thank you Murid for the question and I would like to say that we have a habit which we are very happy to nurture of meeting from time to time, of talking about everything and anything that is reported whether on the bilateral level or in regard to the region, to our hopes for the future, and to our joint efforts for a better future for this entire region. So, in that spirit of friendship, of trust, we have met today. And I am very, very happy and I am very grateful for the warm welcome we have received and for what we have heard and for what we have had the opportunity of expressing ourselves in terms of confidence regarding the future and hopes that our dreams will be turned into realities in terms of a comprehensive peace in this area.

[Peres] We respect so much the experience of the king and his judgment that we consult with him not just on the bilateral relations between Jordan and Israel but about a subject which is dear to us and common to all of us: how to proceed with the process of peace in all other places until it will become comprehensive. On the part of Israel, may I say, that we will always seek the advice and the counsel of the king on such matters.

[Jerusalem Channel TV 2's Aharon Barne'a] Your Majesty, yesterday you had an important meeting, I suppose, with the foreign minister of the Saudi Arabia kingdom — a first visit of a member of the court in Saudi Arabia in Jordan after the Gulf war. What are the prospects of renewing relations on a normal level between Jordan and Saudi Arabia and the rest of the Arab Gulf states?

[Husayn] I believe that the relations are restored to what they were and will grow stronger, God willing, in the times ahead. The visit was an important landmark in that direction. As far as the Gulf states are concerned, we have excellent relations with all of them, with the exception of Kuwait at this stage. But, when they are ready, God willing, we will have normal and warm relations with them as well. So, what we are trying to achieve is, hopefully, an area where we have harmony, where we talk to each other, where we jointly work for a better future for all our peoples. Thank you.

[Jordanian weekly AL-RA'Y's Caroline Furayj] Mr. Peres, I have heard several officials — and I believe you, Sir, were one of them. You have mentioned that next March you will be having real progress between you and Syria. According to what you have mentioned that date? [question as heard] Do you not think that just accepting the idea of not announcing to the media information about what is going on inside the rooms is a real progress between you and Syria? Thank you.

[Peres] Well the media knows, really, more than we do — at least ahead of us. I did not say March. I said that for us, winning peace is more important than winning elections. By law, we have to go to elections in our country on October 29, 1996. We are trying to do our utmost that we shall be able to bring before our people a proposal for peace with Syria, and we are trying very hard to make it a comprehensive peace with the rest of the Mediterranean countries.

[Qol Yisra'el's Shlomo Raz] Your Majesty, what are the prospects to expand the peace all over the Middle East? *Mr. Prime Minister, when will we see a group picture with all of the Middle East leaders like the one we see here today with you and the king?*

[Husayn] I think that prospects are good and I hope that it will happen. I believe that the approach has been to try and resolve the problems with Egypt and other important partners. Beyond that, I think that comprehensive peace will naturally follow in terms of all the countries of this region.

[Peres] Well, it is not just the photo that we are having, but one may say the X-ray of peace shows a real opportunity to go ahead and have it. One date I am ready to propose, and that is the end of this century, which is a matter of another four years. I do believe that the Middle East can reach a comprehensive, full peace, for the benefit of all peoples in the Middle East.

[Fahd Faniq] Mr. Prime Minister, I would like to ask you about terrorism, which is all the partners of peace are support to fight. [sentence as heard] What is your definition of terrorism, so that it is not be used selectively according to source?

[Peres] The worst form of terrorism is when an armed person comes and kills innocent women and children.

surprisingly, behind the back — trying to achieve what? Terrorism is first of all an expression of brutality, of cruelty, of the lack of discrimination. I mean, whatever you may think about another people, none of us has the right to take away the life of innocent children, of unprotected women, of elderly men. What for?

[Ya'el Abuqasis] Your Majesty, what do you think will be the changes in the relationships between the children from both countries in this era of peace?

[Husayn] I believe that with the tearing down of all the barriers, the relations in the future will be warm, will be worthy of all of them in this entire region, certainly between our children and the children of Israel, the children of Abraham. And I feel that the challenge that we face is to hand them the opportunity, which we have done, as far as the two countries are concerned. And, already one can see, and I could see from the outset, in the eyes of children in my country — as I am sure is the case here — the confidence and the hope and the happiness that the nightmare of the past is behind and that the future, God willing and with his protection and with our best efforts, is a future that is worthy of them. Thank you.

Reactions Reported on Yahya 'Ayyash's Death

Peres Comments

TA0801142896 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1300 GMT 8 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Prime Minister Shim'on Peres hopes that the elimination of Yahya 'Ayyash will not affect the elections in the territories. Answering journalists' questions, Peres said that Israel did everything to help 'Arafat and that it was Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] and Islamic Jihad that created the untenable situation. If anybody thinks he can kill Israelis while we will remain indifferent, he is wrong, the prime minister stressed.

Answering a Norwegian journalist's question about the murder of Ahmed Bouchiki in Lillehammer some 20 years ago, the prime minister said that Israel will not accept responsibility for his killing and will not respond to the accusations of murder because the State of Israel is not an organization of murderers. Peres was speaking at a conference of foreign journalists in Jerusalem, and his remarks were reported by our correspondent Ron Nesi'el.

Earlier, in a meeting of Labor's Knesset faction, the prime minister took issue with coalition chairman Ra'anan Kohen's proposal to the Likud to work together toward bringing the elections forward, saying that he was surprised when he heard the proposal on the radio this morning. Our correspondent Yo'el Nir reports that Peres emphasized that his business is not to bring the elections forward but to promote peace.

The prime minister said that former French President Francois Mitterrand, who passed away this morning, was one of the greatest leaders of the 20th century, a man of rare intellectual stature, and a true friend of Israel who had a deep knowledge of the history of the Jewish people and was an enthusiastic supporter of the peace process.

Netanyahu: 'Ayyash Death 'Good Service'

TA0501154496 Jerusalem Israel Television Channel 1 Network in Hebrew 1430 GMT 5 Jan 96

[Interview with Likud Party Chairman Binyamin Netanyahu by Yisra'el Segal in the studio — live]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Segal] Mr. Netanyahu, are you pleased that Yahya 'Ayyash is dead?

[Netanyahu] I am definitely happy that this bastard got what he deserved. He murdered women and children and innocent civilians, and now he has apparently been eliminated. If indeed he was, the boys who eliminated him did the State of Israel a very good service.

[Segal] Does this not prove that, all in all, the Palestinian Authority either delivers the goods despite fears to the contrary or at least is not preventing us from doing what must done?

[Netanyahu] I believe I can say that in this case and in other recent cases, it did not help us. It appears that in this specific case, it could not or failed to prevent us from doing it. It is very good that it was done. This is precisely the kind of act we have been urging all along: It must be made clear to the murderers that Israel's long arm will find them wherever they may be. 'Ayyash's pupils should know that if they follow in his path, they will meet the same fate and end up like him.

[Segal] Is there a political lesson here? The operation was carried out in Bayt Lahiyah in the Gaza Strip after the IDF [Israel Defense Forces] withdrawal — if indeed this is the story. Doesn't this show that we will do what we must in any event?

[Netanyahu] I have said this on more than one occasion: It must be made clear that although we do not wish to reconquer Gaza, we will act in Gaza as necessary and when called for. Certainly this loathsome creature should have been eliminated, and it is good that he was.

Moledet, Tzomet, Meretz Welcome Killing

TA0501212496 Jerusalem Israel Television Channel 1 Network in Hebrew 1800 GMT 5 Jan 96

[Announcer-read report]

[FBIS Translated Text] Here are some reactions from the politicians: Moledet Chairman Rehav'am Ze'evi welcomes the elimination of Yahya 'Ayyash, the Engineer, and says he hopes his pupils will follow him. Tzomet Chairman Refa'el Eytan says that the terrorists should know that Israel's arm will reach them anywhere. Meretz faction chairman Ran Kohen says well done to those who carried out the liquidation. 'Ayyash was the worst terrorist and the most loathsome enemy of peace.

Israeli Arab Leaders Condemn Killing

TA0701144596 Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew 7 Jan 96 p A4

[Report by Yosef Elgazi]

[FBIS Translated Text] Last night, Arab leaders in Israel condemned the assassination of Yahya 'Ayyash and expressed concern that the action may lead to acts of reprisal and the resumption of terrorist activities and may harm regional stability.

Knesset Member [MK] Hashim Mahamid, chairman of the HADASH [Democratic Front for Peace and Equality] Knesset faction, voiced his opposition to the assassination which, he said, does not serve the peace process and the efforts to build trust between Israel and the Palestinians. "I am concerned about the negative impact of the murder. It might lead to a string of reactions and counteractions, and nobody knows where that will lead. I urge abstaining from such actions," he said.

Deputy Health Minister Nawaf Musaliha, a Labor MK, said he is not sure who killed 'Ayyash and voiced the hope that the killing will end terrorism, will not lead to a new phase of violence, and will not harm stability. He said: "I hope that Israel and the Palestinian Authority [PA] will continue the peace process and safeguard the security of Israelis and Palestinians."

Deputy Agriculture Minister Walid Sadiq has no doubt that Israel was behind the murder. "I fear that it will achieve the opposite of what was intended: It may renew terrorism, and it embarrassed the PA," he said.

MK 'Abd-al-Wahhab Darawshah, chairman of the Arab Democratic Party, expressed regret at the killing, "just as I regret all bloodshed. I hope the killing will not harm the PA elections and will not lead Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] to carry out acts of revenge."

Attorney Usamah Sa'di, spokesman for the Arab Movement for Change, headed by Dr. Ahmad al-Tibi, said the assassination harms the peace process.

Shaykh 'Abdallah Nimr Darwish, head of the Islamic Movement in Israel, called the assassination a blatant violation of the peace accords with the Palestinians. "This is the second time that Israel has infiltrated the autonomy in Gaza under the PA's very nose. I hope that the dialogue between the PA and Hamas will not be harmed."

Response Seen 'Quite Moderate'

TA0901115596 Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew 9 Jan 96 p A3

[Report by Eytan Rabin, Yosi Elgazi, and ITIM]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] A senior military source has stated that the reactions on the Palestinian street to the killing of "Engineer" Yahya 'Ayyash were "quite moderate." High alert is being maintained in the security branches following the killing of 'Ayyash in Bayt Lahiyah in northern Gaza on 5 January.

Defense establishment sources say that reactions to the 'Ayyash killing in the West Bank and Gaza were somewhat surprising. Initially, it was believed that the streets would burst with spontaneous and grave demonstrations of grief, but only sporadic demonstrations were staged.

All the security branches, the IDF [Israel Defense Forces], and the police are on high alert. It has been decided that the closure imposed on the territories will continue at least until the weekend. Defense establishment sources believe that Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] fugitives in the Gaza Strip will try to take 'Ayyash's place and attempt to carry out terror attacks. Information has been obtained about possible suicide revenge attacks. [passage omitted]

Shin Bet Head Quits; Peres Accepts Resignation

TA0801160596 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1557 GMT 8 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The head of the Shin Bet has resigned, and Prime Minister Shim'on Peres has accepted his resignation. This is reported by our political correspondent Shlomo Raz. At this point there are no other details.

Details of Resignation Letter

TA0801163896 Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew 1605 GMT 8 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] We repeat the item we received a few minutes ago. Shin Bet head K. has resigned, and Prime Minister Shim'on Peres has accepted the resignation. Our political correspondent Udi Segal has the initial details:

Prime Minister Peres accepted the Shin Bet head's resignation. K. presented his resignation letter to the prime minister yesterday and thanked him for his backing of the Shin Bet. The prime minister rejected the request and asked him to reconsider, but K. informed the prime minister today that his decision is final. He wrote a letter to the prime minister, and I will present points from the letter. He says: Several days after the assassination of the late Yitzhaq Rabin, prime minister and defense minister, I came to you and the cabinet and announced that the fiasco that led to the terrible assassination is first and foremost that of the service, and then I presented my resignation. K. notes that Peres turned down the request, stressing the missions facing the service, and that K. accepted Peres' request and agreed to stay on.

He goes on: I reject the charges implicit in the warnings sent to me by the state commission of inquiry into the prime minister's assassination. Therefore, I have instructed my attorneys and aides to continue defending my position to the commission with one aim in mind: to make sure its conclusions correspond with my needs, as well as the abilities and limitations of the Shin Bet. K. wrote: I feel that the service is on the right track, and therefore, I now wish to resign from my post. He once again thanked the prime minister and the Israeli cabinet for their total commitment to the service. Prime Minister Peres told the Shin Bet head this morning that since this is a final decision, he accepts the resignation with deep regret and a heavy heart. Peres concludes his remarks by saying: You carried out this holy task without blemish. I wish you success in anything to which you turn. K. will remain in his post until a replacement is found.

Former Navy Commander Named New Head

TA1001053896 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 0500 GMT 10 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Reserves Rear Admiral 'Ami Ayalon, who retired last week as commander of the Navy, has agreed to be the new head of the Shin Bet, the General Security Service [GSS]. This is the first time that the head of the GSS has been named publicly and the first time that a man from outside the service has been appointed as director of the organization.

Ayalon, who originally turned down the offer of the post some time ago, reconsidered his decision following a personal appeal from Prime Minister Shim'on Peres. This came in the wake of the sudden resignation this week of the outgoing GSS head, whose name can still not be published and who is known only by the Hebrew initial K.

The outgoing GSS head spoke yesterday with members of the service and explained his reasons for resigning, but, he said, he was not concerned about the findings of the Shamgar Commission of Inquiry into the assassination of Yitzhaq Rabin. In an interview with Israel Television last night, K. said the GSS is strong and stable. He said he will remain in the post until his successor is settled.

Rear Admiral Ayalon, who is 49 years old, spent years heading Israel's naval commandos before moving up the chain of command in the Navy with various posts. He holds a coveted decoration for bravery gained for a commando action against the Egyptians in 1969, when he successfully led his men on a mission despite being wounded three times in the course of the action.

Our military affairs reporter Alan Ben-'Ami says Ayalon is a highly respected, tough, and resourceful professional officer who will need all his organizational and leadership skills to take charge of the secret service hit hard by the assassination of Yitzhaq Rabin and the abrupt resignation of its current director.

Cabinet Minister Yosi Sarid said this morning he will propose to a ministerial committee that the name of the outgoing director of the Shin Bet be published. Sarid said the identities of the last two directors were known to the Palestinians and right-wing activists and published around the world, while most Israelis were deprived of this knowledge.

Ministers Express Regret at Resignation

TA0801173096 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1700 GMT 8 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Minister Moshe Shahal said that a new Shin Bet head must be appointed immediately. Shahal said he would have preferred K., the Shin Bet head who just resigned, to stay on in his post and that the Shin Bet lost one of its most capable, serious, and sensitive people, especially regarding human rights.

Minister Yosi Sarid expressed regret at the Shin Bet head's resignation, but added that it is a personal matter in which nobody can interfere. We now have to appoint the best man for the job, and it does not matter whether or not it is from within the service.

Knesset Member Hagay Merom, chairman of the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee, also expressed regret at the resignation, but said he respects the decision and sees it as serving as an example to those under K.

GSS To Expel U.S. Citizen for al-Aqsa Plot

TA0801104796 Jerusalem THE JERUSALEM POST in English 8 Jan 96 p 1

[Report by Bill Hutman]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The General Security Service [GSS] has requested that an American citizen residing in Jerusalem be deported on grounds he was involved in a plot to blow up al-Aqsa Mosque.

The American, David Ben-Ari'el, 35, of Ohio, was detained in Jerusalem's Old City Thursday [4 January] by the GSS and taken to the Russian Compound for interrogation. He was released after several hours of questioning, but his passport was confiscated and he was ordered to report daily to police, which he did yesterday.

Ben-Ari'el and several cohorts who remain at large allegedly planned to blow up al-Aqsa to pave the way for the building of the third temple, security sources said.

Ben-Ari'el strongly denied the allegations, and said he was being unfairly treated by the GSS and police.

The sources said they wanted Ben-Ari'el deported, and not brought to trial, because they were concerned they lacked hard evidence to convict him.

"It is no secret, and I have written a book about it, that I want al-Aqsa removed and the temple rebuilt," Ben-Ari'el said. "But I have no plans to remove it myself. That's the government's job."

Ben-Ari'el, a member of the Temple Mount Faithful which that also calls for the removal of al-Aqsa, said he came here about nine months ago, and recently applied for citizenship.

He said he works at an Old City youth hostel, where GSS agents found him on Thursday, and that he has been to the country on many occasions in the recent years, often for extended stays.

'Hundreds' Mourn Yahya 'Ayyash, Support Hamas

JN0901083096 Amman JORDAN TIMES in English 9 Jan 96 p 3

["Special to the JORDAN TIMES" by Lula al-Kilani]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Amman—Hundreds of Jordanians Sunday visited the home of Muhammad Nazzal, a representative of the Islamic Resistance Movement, Hamas, to pay condolences over the death of Yahya 'Ayyash in Gaza on Friday

Mr. 'Ayyash was assassinated when a cellular phone he was using packed with 50 grammes of explosives blew up. Israel held Mr. 'Ayyash responsible for a number of suicide bombing attacks that left 80 people in Israel dead.

According to one visitor, the gathering of mourners turned into a "political rally", where members of the Islamic Action Front (IAF), Hamas youths, and parliamentarians were receiving visitors from al- 'Aqabah, al-Salt, al-Baqa'ah and Irbid, who came to express solidarity with Hamas and "condemn the assassination of the martyr."

Community leaders, public figures and political party leaders were invited by Ibrahim Ghawshah, the spokesperson of Hamas in Amman, to deliver three-minute speeches, a visitor who preferred anonymity told the JORDAN TIMES.

According to another source, who spoke on the condition of anonymity, many turned down the invitation, and those who agreed to speak avoided denouncing either Israel or the Palestinian National authority.

"It was visible that speakers, coming from the different strata of the society, applauded, the "engineer" and praised his acts of heroism, but avoided blaming any party for the killing," the source said.

One speaker said that "'Ayyash has managed to produce hundreds of 'Ayyashs," adding that his martyrdom was exemplary.

Israel, who placed Mr. 'Ayyash on its most-wanted list, welcomed the assassination.

President of the Palestinian National Authority PNA, Yasir 'Arafat, Sunday condemned the assassination and accused Israel of being behind it. Mr. 'Arafat called on Israel not to violate the peace and not to enter the PNA territories.

Current and former ministers, left wing party leaders, journalists and community leaders offered their condolences at the Nazzal home, the source said.

King, U.S. Secretary Perry Give News Conference

JN0701221696 Amman Jordan Television Network in English 2000 GMT 7 Jan 96

[Announcer-read report over video; from the "News At Ten" Feature]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The U.S. Defense Secretary William Perry said in Amman today that he sees Jordan as a lynchpin in the security of the Middle East region and pledged to strengthen defense cooperation with the country. Perry said, after talks with his majesty the king, that there is now a possibility for a comprehensive peace in the Middle East region.

Perry, who flew into Amman from a visit to Saudi Arabia, discussed with the king the Middle East peace process and Jordanian- U.S. bilateral relations, particularly in the defense field.

Perry also met Prime Minister al-Sharif Zayd Bin-Shakir for talks on furthering Jordanian-U.S. bilateral relations and developing the defensive capabilities of the Jordanian Armed Forces. The talks touched on regional and international issues including developments on the Syrian-Israeli track of negotiations.

At the end of his talks, Perry said, at a news conference, with the king that he offered Jordan a military package, including 16 F16 fighter bombers. The king reaffirmed that Jordan would continue to work towards a comprehensive and lasting peace in the Middle East region.

[Begin recording] [Husayn, in progress] ...and I am very, very happy, indeed, to say that this friendship, this alliance, this cooperation is as warm as it has ever been, and promises to develop further in the times ahead. In terms of Jordan, its democracy, the peace it has achieved, all that it means and represents, has over the years been defended by its Armed Forces. These Armed Forces have also taken part in the region in training others, and helping whatever possible. They have been a force for stability and now they are a force for peace and progress towards comprehensive peace in this region, and are committed to the defense of all our achievements so far. In addition to that, obviously, they are playing a very important role as far as we Jordanians are concerned. Within the world as a whole they played that in many peace-keeping missions, and they, hopefully, will continue to play that in an effective role and manner in the future, wherever their is a need for their participation.

[Perry] We see for the first time the possibilities of a comprehensive peace in the Middle East. Critical to that are the talks, peace talks under way between Israel and Syria today. And we hope for success in those talks. If we can really reach a comprehensive peace settlement in the Middle East, it will undoubtedly be because of the model set by Jordan in the Jordanian-Israeli peace agreement, not just in the initiative taken by King Husayn in this agreement, but in the exemplary way in which that peace agreement has been carried out. So, we see Jordan as the lynchpin in the security of the Middle East. In addition, Jordan is a longtime friend and ally of the United States, and in particular the cooperation between our two defense departments is strong and is becoming stronger. I am here in this visit to strengthen and deepen that relationship.

[Unidentified correspondent] Your Majesty and Dr. Perry, I would like to ask is: [as heard] The United States has offered to sell Jordan F16 fighter jets. Is Jordan going to buy them? And since Jordan has been prevented from buying offensive weapons from the United States until late, is this a reward for making peace with Israel and turning your back on Iraq?

[Husayn] And as far as Iraq is concerned, once again I would like to emphasize that we are and we have always been against the use of force in this region by one country against the other. And therefore, if there has been an interest in Iraq — and that continues to be a very, very strong one — it is in seeing how Iraq can recover from where its, in terms of its people, in terms of importance, in terms of the right of its people to hopefully live a life of achievements in the future within this region as it moves towards a better future, which is its rights, in term of peace and progress and stability. And our hope for Iraq will continue to be that it will enjoy very soon democracy that will be a symbol of a working pluralism and, hopefully, the people of Iraq will enjoy the rights that are theirs and that have been denied them for very long. Within the human context, we will do whatever we can towards that end. We are supportive of that and we are obviously very supportive of the unity of Iraq and the territorial integrity of that country. We are very aware of its importance within this region both now and in the future.

As far as offensive weapons are concerned, I don't believe that much has changed over the years. We have weapons that we have guarded and used to defend ourselves in this country and to defend whatever is of value to both of us in the United States and in Jordan. And our role in different theaters where we have been required to help or cooperate with others in keeping peace is well known. And within the region, we have always been for peace and stability and for progress. So, as a result of all that, I don't see that we have any problems whatsoever, nor should these relations go back to where they were or should be. And I believe they are warmer than they have ever been. The relations that could not be described in any other way other than being close, friendly relations based on mutual respect and the desire of us to, on both sides, to cooperate and see them grow and develop as partners and all we seek to achieve in the future.

[Perry] I have met three or four times with King Husayn since I have been the secretary of defense and we have discussed the ways in which the Untied States can support the modernization of the Jordanian Armed Forces. Most recently, we met in September in Washington. At that meeting, I promised him I would present him a comprehensive package to include F16's. Tonight, I made good on that promise. I made a proposal to him that will include M60-A3 tanks, night vision devices, a squadron of F16's, a total of 16, including 12 F16 A's and four F16 B's. These will be upgraded to a modern capability and will include the training, spare parts, and logistic support necessary. This is will be part of the ongoing cooperation between the Jordanian Defense Department and the American Defense Department. It will lead to an even closer relationship. And, as I told his majesty, a bonding between our two air forces. I think that is entirely appropriate, given my earlier assessment of Jordan being a lynchpin of security in the Middle East. [end recording]

Prime Minister, Secretary Perry View Cooperation

JN0701192996 Amman Jordan Television Network in Arabic 1800 GMT 7 Jan 96

[Announcer-read report over video]

[FBIS Translated Text] His Excellency Prime Minister al-Sharif Zayd Bin-Shakir received U.S. Defense Secretary William Perry and his accompanying delegation at the Prime Ministry this afternoon.

Talks touched on the distinguished relations between the two friendly countries and means of boosting them. They also dealt with the U.S. assistance to Jordan and developing the defense capabilities of the Jordanian Armed Forces, particularly the Royal Jordanian Air Force and supplying it with modern planes.

Chief among the topics discussed was the peace process and its impact on stability in the Middle East.

Perry lauded Jordan's contribution to the world peacekeeping forces, particularly in Bosnia, which started to witness stability following the signing of the Dayton agreement among the warring parties.

The meeting was attended by Dr. Fayiz al-Tarawinah, Jordanian ambassador in Washington; Lieutenant General 'Abd-al-Hafiz Mar'i al- Ka'abinah, chairman of the joint chiefs of staff; Staff Major General Raji Nur Haddad, assistant chief of staff for planning; and the U.S. ambassador in Amman.

Details of U.S. Military Aid Package Reported

JN0801092196 Amman JORDAN TIMES in English 8 Jan 96 pp 1, 3

[Report by Ayman al-Safadi]

[FBIS Transcribed Excerpt] Amman—The Kingdom on Sunday [7 January] accepted a U.S. military assistance package that includes a squadron of F-16 fighter bombers, upgraded tanks as well as other military equipment to help modernise the Jordanian Armed Forces.

U.S. Secretary of Defence William Perry announced the package yesterday after holding talks with His Majesty King Husayn, Prime Minister al-Sharif Zayd Bin Shakir and other senior officials.

Mr. Perry told reporters during a joint press conference with the King the U.S. will provide Jordan with 12 F-16A version fighter bombers and four F-16 version B aircraft in fulfillment of a promise he made to King Husayn in Washington last September.

The package also entails training, spare parts and support for the aircraft, which will be upgraded to current standards.

"The offer has been made and it has been accepted with deep appreciation," King Husayn told reporters after meeting with Mr. Perry at Raghadan Palace.

Although the U.S. will not provide Jordan with its top of the line battle field tanks, the military package announced Sunday includes upgraded M-60 tanks which Mr. Perry described as sufficient for the Kingdom's needs.

Mr. Perry said the package will be paid for by a special draw- down funds that has already been authorised and allocations for Jordan in the U.S. foreign military assistance programme. But he would not provide details on the financial aspects of the deal.

Mr. Perry said in a meeting with a number of Jordanian journalists that Israel has offered to provide maintenance services to the aircraft. He also said the airforce bases in Jordan will have to be upgraded in order to be able to operate the F-16 fighters.

The single seat F-16A aircraft is the top war plane used by Israel. The double seat F-16B is used for training purposes.

Mr. Perry said a Jordanian airforce team will fly to the U.S. soon to work out details of the deal.

It was not clear, however, whether the military package meets the requests for military assistance that the Kingdom has asked for in order to modernise its armed forces. The packages is separate from a $100m assistance programme to Jordan which is now before Congress.

At his joint press conference with Mr. Perry, the King said the Jordanian Armed Forces have been a force for stability in the region and have been the defender of pluralism and democracy in the Kingdom and "whatever of value to both" Jordan and the United States.

Noting that the Jordanian army has played an importance role in training other militaries in the area, the King stressed that the Jordanian army will continue to be a force for peace and stability and will defend the Kingdom's achievements in peace and democracy.

He said the armed forces have been "a source of pride" for the role it played in international peacekeeping missions, saying that the Jordanian army will not hesitate to partake of these missions again if there was a need for that.

"We are committed to defending democracy, pluralism, peace, progress and stability," said the King who added that the U.S. was a long time ally of Jordan and that relations between the two countries are "as normal" as they have ever been.

The King added that the Kingdom will continue to work side by side with the U.S. to achieve a comprehensive peace "which is about to become a reality" in the Middle East.

Describing Jordan as a strong ally of the United States, Mr. Perry said the U.S. and the Jordanian defence establishment have maintained close cooperation in the past and the new package will lead to closer cooperation.

Mr. Perry, who arrived in Jordan from Saudi Arabia, described Jordan as a "linchpin for security and stability in the Middle East."

Mr. Perry praised not only the "initiative" of King Husayn in making peace with Israel, but also the "exemplary" way in which the peace process with Israel is being implemented.

Responding to a question on Iraq, Mr. Perry said "we strongly support the initiative of King Husayn on Iraq. We are following his lead (and we will provide support as he perceives." King Husayn's actions are intend to help the people of Iraq, he said.

King Husayn reiterated that federation among the three components of the Iraqi society is only one of the options that the Iraqis might consider in determining the political future of their country, adding that he repeated this option after hearing it from some Iraqis.

He said Jordan's interest is in helping representatives of all segments of the Iraqi society to save their country and rehabilitate it to play its role in the region. [passage omitted]

Editorial Praises Defense Relationship With U.S.

JN0801101896 Amman AL-DUSTUR in Arabic 8 Jan 96 pp 1, 20

[Editorial: "Jordanian-U.S. Relations"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The Jordanian leg of U.S. Defense Secretary William Perry's tour was an opportunity to review an important aspect of the historical relations between Jordan and the United States, especially in relation to defense cooperation between two states bound by ties of friendship and mutual respect.

The vigor and continuity of this relationship stem from the fact that both Jordan and the United States adhere to a single set of values and principles. This has enabled the relationship to overcome the past few hardships and misunderstandings, which have left no repercussions.

This fact was starkly evident in the news conference held by His Majesty King Husayn and the U.S. defense secretary yesterday, when his majesty stressed that we in Jordan share with the United States a host of values, headed by defending democracy, pluralism, peace, and respect for human rights. It was from this angle that Jordan viewed the U.S. role in the region for many decades. The Jordanian leadership continued to insist on an indispensable U.S. role in the attainment of regional peace. It called on the United States to play this role because it was qualified to play it, unlike the other international powers which tried to advance the peace process, but in vain.

A quick review of U.S. Defense Secretary William Perry's statement yesterday to the effect that Jordan serves as a real peace-making model shows the important position Jordan occupies in the region—not only because it is an exemplary peacemaker, but also because it is a force for moderation and an element of security and stability in the Middle East.

In view of all this, we are indeed proud of this U.S. concept of Jordan's status and role, and are happy that our relations with the United States are characterized by cooperation based on mutual respect and friendship—particularly at this stage in which the extraordinary importance of the United States as the only superpower playing an indispensable role, especially for the peoples of the Middle East, is underlined.

Columnist Hails Impending Arrival of U.S. Jets

JN1001163696 Amman AL-RA'Y in Arabic 10 Jan 96 p 18

["Highlights" column by Dr. Fahd al-Fanik: "The F-16 planes"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Jordan will soon be supplied with several F-16 planes and modern tanks which the United States recently agreed to provide after the U.S. Department of Defense found a way to finance this deal from its own budget. The end result is that Jordan will only pay the cost of the accessories requested by pilots.

For the first time, the technology gap in the field of weaponry is being closed. We have always been unable to find anyone willing to sell us a certain model of weapons before its technology becomes obsolete and before a new generation of weapons is produced.

The Jordanian Army has been deprived of the most up-to-date weapons because the U.S. exporter was eager to promote Israel's total security no matter what, although supplying Jordan with weapons would not have altered the balance of power with Israel, which enjoys a military edge over the Arab armies, combined or separate.

It is implicitly understood that the modern and effective weapons Jordan will acquire should not be used against Israel. However, this condition is unimportant, because Jordan has neither the intention nor the desire to attack Israel, not out of love for Israel, but to promote the security of the country and remain in compliance with the peace treaty, which no one said could be revoked at any time.

Having said all this, modern weapons in Jordan's hands can be used to defend Jordan against external aggression, including Israeli aggression. There are no U.S. stipulations preventing Jordan from engaging in self-defense. Thus, Jordan's security will be enhanced, so it will not be utterly dependent on the goodwill of others.

Additionally, the Israeli menace was not the only peril posed to Jordan. The military conflict with Israel was not the only reason Jordan needed modern arms supplies. I am not insinuating that we have to engage in a war with Syria, Iraq, or Saudi Arabia. Such a scenario is unacceptable both theoretically and in practice.

What I would like to say is that effective weapons in the hands of the Jordanian Army can be put to good use under certain conditions. If Jordan were to come to the rescue of a certain Arab state that could fall victim to foreign aggression, a Jordanian Air Force supplied with F-16 planes would be a force to be reckoned with. If Ethiopia or Eritrea covets Yemeni territory, if Chad covets Libyan territory, if Iran covets Iraqi territory, or if Turkey covets Syrian or Iraqi territory, a Jordanian Air Force in possession of F-16 planes would be a force to be reckoned with.

For us to have a say in the affairs of the region, we have to be strong. Moreover, our army deserves the most sophisticated weapons.

Riyadh Seeks Clarification on Support for Qatar

JN0601170596 Amman AL-URDUN in Arabic
8 Jan 96 p 1

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] AL-URDUN learned that the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia asked for an official Jordanian clarification on the close Jordanian-Qatari ties. The request was made against the background of the recent Qatari-Saudi dispute over the General Secretariat of the Gulf Cooperation Council and the Jordanian foreign minister's visit to Qatar which was viewed as supportive of the Qatari stance.

AL-URDUN also learned that Jordanian-Saudi contacts are currently under way to clarify the Jordanian position and to try to convince the Saudi side not to link Sa'ud al-Faysal's visit to Amman to the Qatari-Jordanian relationship. These contacts have succeeded in approximating views, and this will put reconciliation back on track.

Egyptian President Husni Mubarak said in 'Aqabah on 26 December 1995 that the Saudi foreign minister will visit Amman on 29 December. However, Prince Sa'ud al-Faysal took part in the meeting of the Damascus Declaration states but failed to show up in Amman as was scheduled. [passage omitted]

King Views Ties With Saudi Arabia, Iraq

NC0901190796 London MBC Television in Arabic
1800 GMT 9 Jan 96

["Exclusive" interview with King Husayn by Sa'd al-Silawi in Amman on 9 January—recorded]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Husayn] With reference to my meeting with His Highness Prince Sa'ud al-Faysal, I was very pleased to have had this chance to welcome him again to Jordan, his second homeland. I have always felt great amity toward, appreciation of, and pride in his highness. He is a true Arab who continues to give much to the wellbeing of this nation and the Arab march. As for bilateral relations, they are fraternal relations that we will always cherish and preserve in our hearts and consciences. Recently they were marred by blemishes, which were as harmful and painful to us as our brothers. We must praise God that this period is over and that things have returned to what they should be. We must build these relations on the most solid foundations of mutual trust, frankness, and clarity. We view these relations as outstanding, and, God willing, through these meetings, will protect them from all the dangers that affected them in the past. These meetings, I believe, are fundamental; they are just the start, God willing.

[Al-Silawi] Will we see more of these meetings, Your Majesty?

[Husayn] God willing, God willing.

[Al-Silawi] Your Majesty, the issue of a federation in Iraq is mistakenly being viewed as a Jordanian proposal. Today Iraq criticized Jordan somewhat. Your position and the Saudi position on Iraq and the need to save the Iraqi people are almost identical.

[Husayn] Sir, the Iraqi issue is our main concern in terms of its humanitarian aspect, the wish for a fraternal country that is dear to all of us, the desire to see the tragedy and suffering of this people end as soon as possible, and the primary wish for Iraq's unity and sovereignty over all its territories. The parties that make accusations or cast doubt do not see the reality; this is demonstrated by a referendum being held in some parts, but not all of Iraq, something that consecrates the bitter reality of partition within Iraq's boundaries. All we wish for the Iraqis is for all of them to get together and cooperate, with our full support and backing, to return to their nation's fold and exercise their right to live on their national soil in unity and cooperation, according to the formula they themselves choose. By so doing, they would neither pose a threat to themselves nor to the region around them and their suffering would last no longer than it already has. Iraq is a country of abundance. It is Mesopotamia. It is a country of civilization, history, and pluralism. It should not keep going through what it is going through now. This is what is on our mind.

[Al-Silawi] Thank you, Your Majesty, for this exclusive interview with MBC.

[Husayn] God bless you. Thank you.

Saudi Minister's Talks Focus on Iraq

MM1101121696 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic
11 Jan 96 p 5

[Report by Salamah Ni'mat: "Sa'ud al-Faysal Discusses in Amman Coordination of Stands on Situation in Iraq"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Amman — Jordanian and other Arab diplomatic sources said yesterday that the talks held by Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Sa'ud al-Faysal, who departed Amman yesterday, "went beyond the familiar diplomatic courtesies and dealt with the efforts to coordinate stands on regional issues, first and foremost the situation in Iraq."

The sources said that King Husayn's awaited visit to Saudi Arabia, scheduled to take place early in Ramadan [which begins around 21/22 January] "will determine the possibility of adopting a unified stand on the complications of the situation in Iraq and its adverse effects on the states of the region."

Prince Sa'ud al-Faysal — who held talks with King Husayn, Prime Minister al-Sharif Zayd Bin-Shakir, and Foreign Minister 'Abd-al- Karim al-Kabariti — announced following the talks that two sides "reached a clear and joint view on the foundations on which relations between the two countries should be built."

As is known, the Saudi minister handed a message to King Husayn from Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Fahd Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz, which included an invitation to visit Saudi Arabia. It was noted that Prince Sa'ud al-Faysal's statements on Iraq, especially laying the blame for the Iraqi people's plight on the Iraqi leadership, were identical to the Jordanian position.

Western diplomatic sources expect Jordan to work — with U.S. support — to coordinate with Saudi Arabia "to build an Arab alliance to prevent further regional interferences."

U.S. Defense Secretary William Perry, who held talks with King Husayn last Sunday, announced U.S. support for the Jordanian position on Iraq, saying that the Jordanian initiative is aimed at bringing about a change in the Iraqi leadership to guarantee that the Iraqi people's suffering is alleviated.

Authorities Turn Away Iraqi Opposition Leader

JN0801160096 Amman AL-MAJD in Arabic 8 Jan 96 p 1

[FBIS Translated Text] Jordanian authorities on the border with Syria have turned away Mish'an al-Juburi, leader of the Iraqi opposition al-Watan Party. He was prohibited from entering Jordan two days ago following a short visit to Syria.

In a statement, a copy of which was faxed to AL-MAJD, the al-Watan Party Information Bureau expressed astonishment at this surprising deportation which took place without any explanation. This is despite the fact that al-Juburi, who has been living in Amman along with his family for six years, and holding a valid Jordanian passport, had visited Syria three times over the past two months via the same road.

The statement added: We are astonished at this measure, especially since al-Juburi used to enjoy Jordanian protection even at times when Jordanian relations with the Iraqi regime were at their best. The party and its leader, al-Juburi, have always stressed the importance of the Jordanian role in supporting the Iraqi people.

The party also expressed the hope that his majesty the king will interfere to correct this situation.

King's Plans for Iraq Said Accepted by Neighbors

NC1001161296 (Clandestine) Voice of Iraqi People in Arabic 1500 GMT 10 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Jordanian sources have stated that King Husayn is determined to carry on with his call for change in Iraq to save the Iraqi people from their ordeal caused by Saddam Husayn's policies. The sources said the Jordanian monarch's call received broad favorable reaction in the neighboring states despite reservations by a few countries. The sources said that King Husayn received Arab and international support and that the United States emphasized its approval of King Husayn's plan, away from direct military or political intervention in Iraq.

Meanwhile, a Jordanian official said that Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Sa'ud al-Faysal's talks with Jordanian officials focused on this issue and that Saudi Arabia was interested in learning Jordan's position on Iraq. Arriving in Amman yesterday, Prince Sa'ud al- Faysal stressed that his country sympathizes with the Iraqi people's situation and sees a need to resolve it. But he blamed Saddam Husayn for the current situation in Iraq.

No Invitation Said Received To Resume Talks

NC0601191096 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 1715 GMT 6 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Lebanon's ambassador to Washington Riyad Tabbarah said after meeting President Ilyas al-Hirawi today that the Lebanese side has not received any invitation or signal for the resumption of the talks on the Lebanese-Israeli track. He stressed that the Lebanese side is prepared for such talks and that its files are ready. Ambassador Tabbarah added that the Foreign Ministry, in collaboration with some experts, are preparing charts containing the points that may be raised during the negotiations, particularly Israel's withdrawal from the south as well as the security arrangements.

Dallul: Talks' Resumption Depends on Christopher

NC0801081096 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 0700 GMT 8 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Defense Minister Muhsin Dallul has stated that Lebanon will decide whether to the resume the peace talks with Israel in light of the results of U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher's coming visit to the region. He added that Lebanon will decide after consulting with Syria.

'Source' on Christopher's Tour, Peres' Remarks

NC1101074596 Ba'labakk Voice of the Oppressed in Arabic 0630 GMT 11 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] A senior government source has described U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher's tour of the region that began yesterday as a very important phase in the Syrian-Israeli negotiating track; but he warned against expecting speedy results and betting on definitive dates to activate talks on the Lebanese track.

The source denied any Israeli proposal concerning the Lebanese track. He was reacting to Israeli Prime Minister Shim'on Peres' recent statements in which he spoke about Israel's agreement to the Lebanese army's partial entry into parts of the occupied south.

The government source said these statements are merely part of Peres' domestic propaganda policy.

The source added that Peres says he wants security in exchange for withdrawal so he can justify Israel's continued occupation of part of the Lebanese territories. The source remarked, however, that Lebanon is not interested in such ideas because it knows what it wants. It wants, the source went on, a withdrawal from the occupied territories which will guarantee security inside Lebanon.

Buwayz Rejects Offer of Partial Israeli Withdrawal

NC0901184196 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 1715 GMT 9 Jan 96

[Interview with Foreign Minister Faris Buwayz by "Wardih" in Beirut on 9 January — recorded]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Wardih] Minister Buwayz, what is your response to the proposal for the Lebanese south issued by Israeli Prime Minister Shim'on Peres through the media?

[Buwayz] A proposal between two parties or countries follows a particular formality. It is done either by informing embassies, or, as is the case now, through the U.S. mediator, or, supposedly, at the negotiating table. This so-called proposal was made by Peres through the newspapers. Lebanon has not been told of any written or oral proposal through any party. Hence, we consider this to be more a propaganda race to show a positive attitude than a serious proposal.

As for this proposal's content, we believe that any proposal regarding the south must be made on the basis of Israel's full withdrawal from all the occupied Lebanese territories to behind the internationally recognized borders in the interest of enabling the Lebanese State to impose its authority. What do we mean by this? We mean that we are not willing to negotiate over partial withdrawals, but are ready to negotiate over full withdrawal from the south. Second, it means that there must be a withdrawal to behind the internationally recognized borders. In other words, our borders are not a subject for negotiation. They are firm and clear borders according to international charters and maps and cannot be changed. Third, when we say that this withdrawal should be carried out in the interest of the Lebanese State so that it can impose its authority, we mean that we should not be held accountable for security and stability if this withdrawal is not carried out, which would mean not enabling the legitimate Lebanese forces to enter. The Israelis sometimes come up with the idea of handing the south to the Lahd militia [South Lebanese Army, SLA], so that they can claim this way that they no longer occupy the south and that this is an internal Lebanese problem. Their idea is to make the SLA part of the Lebanese Army and take over the south area. We reject this proposal. The withdrawal must be carried out in favor of proper Lebanese legitimacy, nothing else. Lebanese legitimacy must then shoulder the responsibility of imposing security and stability and of preventing any armed action in this area.

[Wardih] Minister Buwayz, does this mean this will be your response if the proposal is formally received?

[Buwayz] Of course. This proposal was made through the newspapers with all the ambiguity, contradiction, or media interpretation that this implies. We were not told of it through any of our embassies abroad, certainly not in Washington or through the U.S. sponsor. We read it in the press, just like you.

[Wardih] But if this proposal is formally made, are there other points you would add to those you have mentioned?

[Buwayz] This proposal is not practical. A similar proposal was made by the United States four years ago when we were in Madrid. That proposal called on us to negotiate with Israel over a partial withdrawal from the Jazzin area as one step. The Lebanese stance was clear and unambiguous, namely, we sit at a table only to negotiate Israel's withdrawal from all the south. There might be executive steps, but this is something else. The talks should deal with the timetable for withdrawal from all the occupied south. We will regard any other proposal as deficient and not justifying negotiations.

Al-Hariri Views Peace, Ties With Syria

NC0901210196 Beirut AL-NAHAR in Arabic 1 Jan 96 pp 4-5

[Interview with Prime Minister Rafiq al-Hariri by Ilyas al-Diri and Ahmad 'Ayyash; place and date not given]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [passage omitted] [AL-NAHAR] There is talk in Israel that Lebanon will be offered as a peace prize to Syria. This has caused concern. Are you worried about Lebanon and do the Lebanese have reason to be concerned?

[Al-Hariri] I am not worried about Lebanon. I call on the Lebanese to have faith in their homeland, to have confidence in themselves, and to trust their ability to confront whatever may threaten their fate. Lebanon's fate is not determined by Israel, and I do not believe Syria expects to get Lebanon as a prize. I also do not believe people need to be reminded of Syria's role to restore the unity of Lebanon and its people and consolidate its sovereignty. We cannot forget what Damascus has done to help Lebanon restore its constitutional institutions. Out of its desire to retain Lebanon's constitutional legitimacy, Damascus extended all the necessary facilities for the election of President Ilyas al-Hirawi following the assassination of President Rene Mu'awwad. It also extended genuine help to rebuild the country's military and security forces.

Saying such a thing does the Lebanese an injustice. This talk depicts the Lebanese as a people without a will or national decision. The relationship with Syria is strategic. What Lebanon wants from Syria, just as Syria wants from Lebanon, has been achieved through cooperation and fraternity agreements, which weighed the mutual interests of both countries using the same balance.

[AL-NAHAR] What makes you so sure?

[Al-Hariri] I know that Israel does not hold Lebanon's fate in its hands. Lebanon's fate is in the hands of its people. If they decide on something other than what Israel has in mind, their decision will win out, thanks to Lebanon's ties and friendships, beginning with Syria and including all the Arab and friendly states. Add to this my conviction that Syria has no ambitions in Lebanon.

[AL-NAHAR] Based on this conviction, how can we make the relationship between Lebanon and Syria comfortable and satisfactory for both countries?

[Al-Hariri] Syria has no ambitions in Lebanon. Frankly speaking, I have extensive proof to support this. Had Syria had ambitions in Lebanon, it would have declined to support the Army, which was torn apart, the same as the internal security forces were torn apart, by the civil war. What other country but Syria has been helping us since the end of the civil war to rebuild the Army? We received weapons from the Americans and minor training assistance here and there, but the main support for us in rebuilding the Army came from Syria. Had Syria had plans for Lebanon, the easiest thing for it to do would have been to leave the Lebanese to rebuild the Army on their own. Now the Army has become a major institution in the country. It has the capability for control and is preparing to head south to take charge of security there once an agreement with Israel is concluded. It can do this. We have attained this capability with clear, open, and direct support from Syria, no other. The same is true for the internal security forces. Syria encourages efforts to strengthen these forces and supports them when the need arises. The same applies to the other security agencies. To be a state a state needs constitutional institutions and security agencies. When late President Rene Mu'awwad was martyred, Syria extended all the necessary facilities to hold presidential elections. Had it harbored ambitions, as is being claimed, it would not have done that and would have left Lebanon to stumble along without a president, with all the consequences of chaos, disorder, and a leap into the unknown.

[AL-NAHAR] Why is Israel reiterating this?

[Al-Hariri] This is not the first time Israel has said this. There is a general impression in the Arab countries now, especially in Lebanon and Syria, that Israel seriously wants peace. This is based on positions expressed by

Israeli Prime Minister Shim'on Peres', but we should not forget that Israel attacked the south yesterday, killing citizens. It is still an enemy country occupying part of our territory. Hence, the Israeli talk aims to shake the Lebanese people's self-confidence and deal a blow to the confidence between us and the Syrians. What I am trying to say is that Lebanon's fate will be decided by its sons with the help of our country's friendships and ties, particularly with Syria and the Arab and friendly countries. This is why I am convinced that Syria has no ambitions in Lebanon. Syria's actions say the same thing. If it had any ambitions, the course it is pursuing would not lead to their fulfillment.

[AL-NAHAR] Opposition and neutral figures in Lebanon are saying that peace will be at Lebanon's expense.

[Al-Hariri] I do not say that those saying this have intentions. That might be the case. Nothing deters Israel from seeking to make peace at our expense, apart from Lebanese-Syrian cohesion on the negotiations.

[AL-NAHAR] Do you expect this spring to be the spring of peace?

[Al-Hariri, laughing] You want to revisit the tale of spring.

[AL-NAHAR] Will it be at the beginning of the summer, in the next three months, for example?

[Al-Hariri] The word spring might be given several meanings. I have said that work will begin in spring because we will have been in power for six months. We have presented projects and drawn up plans during this period.

[AL-NAHAR] Has the peace date become an imminent reality?

[Al-Hariri] All the signs are that Israel is dealing with things seriously. We know Syria has been serious about seeking peace for some time. We will know how serious the Israelis are when it comes to seeking peace in the coming weeks.

[AL-NAHAR] How clear is Lebanon's role in the negotiations?

[Al-Hariri] The focus now is on the Syrian-Israeli track. This is a thing we understand. Why? First, because the existing problems between Israel and Syria are more than those between Israel and Lebanon. It is true that we have a Resistance. But Syria represents a serious security and strategic concern for Israel. Thus the problems between Syria and Israel differ from those between Lebanon and Israel. Another thing is that negotiations between Lebanon and Israel are governed by Resolution 425 while negotiations between Syria and Israel are governed by Resolutions 242 and 338, which are based on the principle of land in return for peace. Resolution 425 is based on the principle of withdrawal in return for security, which is something else. Yet we are ready to establish peace if it is complete and comprehensive. This is a very important point. It is natural that they complete the negotiations with Syria and natural for us to be last. How could peace be complete and comprehensive if the other Arabs, primarily Syria, have not completed their negotiations yet? We are basically in this position in accordance with Resolution 425. To protect Lebanon from any Israeli tyranny in the negotiations and to protect Syria from being isolated, Lebanon and Syria agreed that Lebanon would not sign a peace agreement before Syria and Syria would not sign a peace agreement before Lebanon. What is happening now on the Syrian track will stop ahead of a peace agreement until an agreement is reached with us. Then we and the Syrians will sign together. This is the agreement between us and the Syrians. They are committed to it. All the negotiations now will not lead to a peace agreement between Syria and Israel, because Syria will not sign unless we sign too.

[AL-NAHAR] Some Lebanese are convinced that Lebanon has not prepared itself or its file for the negotiations.

[Al-Hariri] There are files on all the issues we believe the negotiations will deal with. Resolution 425 is the basis of Lebanon's negotiating position. When Israel abides by it, then we can move to other issues. Of course, coordination with Damascus does not stop with the occupied territories in the south and al-Biqa'.

[AL-NAHAR] You intend to set up, on your own initiative, a center overseeing Barcelona's European-Lebanese negotiations. Would it not be better to set up such a center for the negotiations with Israel?

[Al-Hariri] We have enough information about our positions and problems with Israel, whether security or others. There will be no fear when the time comes. We will be more than ready when the need arises.

[AL-NAHAR] Are you confident of Lebanon's future and its fate as a state?

[Al-Hariri] Of course. The real answer to this lies in rebuilding our establishments, restoring Arab and international confidence in us, and, before that, restoring national confidence in Lebanon and its emergence from the effects of the war on the people and possessions. [passage omitted]

Hizballah Threatens to Attack U.S. Interests

NC0501180396 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 1715 GMT 5 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Hizballah official in charge of the southern region, Shaykh Nabil Qawuq, said that the climate of optimism prevailing in the tracks of negotiations does not concern Hizballah. We will continue to strike and will give the enemy no chance to breathe, he said.

Shaykh Muhammad Yazbik, member of Hizballah shura council, has threatened to attack American interests all over the world if America tries to carry out terrorist operations against the Islamic Republic of Iran. Yazbik believes that talk about an approaching peace between Syria and Israel is a probability in view of the Israeli position.

Hizballah has announced in a statement that one of its groups detonated an explosive charge under a semi-tracked vehicle belonging to Lahd's [South Lebanese Army] troops this afternoon, killing or wounding its crew members.

Israelis Shell Villages; Post Attacked With Rockets

NC0801173596 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1630 GMT 8 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The outskirts of Mayfadun, Zawtar al-Gharbiyah, and Zawtar al-Sharqiyah came under artillery fire from the Israeli post in Qal'at al-Shaqif this afternoon.

The occupation forces later extended the range of their bombardment and shelled the al-Litani River basin, Mazra'at al-Hamra', Hima Arnun, and the vicinity of Yuhmur.

According to security sources, the occupation forces' post in Qal'at al-Shaqif was the target of a barrage of rocket fire this afternoon.

A source in the agent Lahd's militia [South Lebanese Army] admitted that an Israeli patrol was shelled with 80-mm and 120-mm mortar fire on the Qal'at al-Shaqif road this afternoon and that the occupation forces' post was the target of a rocket attack at the same time. The enemy claimed that it had suffered no casualties.

Al-Asad: 'Atmospheres' of Talks 'Better Than Before'

JN0801190596 Damascus Syrian Arab Television Network in Arabic 1830 GMT 8 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] President Hafiz al-Asad received the Norwegian parliamentary delegation at the People's palace at 1500 today. The delegation, which is currently visiting Syria, is led by Norwegian Parliament Speaker Kirsti Kolle Grondahl.

People's Assembly Speaker 'Abd-al-Qadir Qaddurah and the Norwegian ambassador to Syria attended the meeting.

The talks dealt with the delegation's exploratory mission in the region, the peace process, and Syria's stand toward it.

The president stressed that Syria has been with the peace process since the Madrid conference, and that it is committed to the bases of this conference.

The president pointed out that the talks which were held in the United States took place in atmospheres which were better than before.

The president urged Norway and the other European states to play an effective role in advancing the peace process toward its aspired objectives.

The Norwegian Parliament speaker expressed her country's interest in peace in the region, and its desire to contribute to advancing the peace process.

Al-Shar' Interviewed on Maryland Talks

NC0501202496 London MBC Television in Arabic 1703 GMT 5 Jan 95

[Interview via satellite with Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar' in Damascus, former Assistant U.S. Secretary of State Joseph Sisco in Washington, and Walid Abu-Murshid from AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT newspaper in London, by Nidal Qabalan in London and Muhammad al-Shinnawi from the Voice of America in Washington; from the "Dialogue With the West" program in collaboration with the Voice of America and Worldnet Television — live]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [passage omitted] [Qabalan] As we promised you dear viewers, Foreign Minister Mr. Faruq al-Shar' is with us on the air from Damascus. Your Excellency; good evening.

[Al-Shar'] Good evening to you.

[Qabalan] The Syrian position on peace, and specifically on the issue of Golan, is clear and fixed. Have there been any concessions, and what are these concessions which activated that track?

[Al-Shar'] What activated the track was recent developments in Israel. Syria has been calling for a just and comprehensive peace in the region, based on international legitimacy and the relevant UN Security Council resolutions, as well as the land-for-peace principle. Since the Madrid conference, Syria has suggested the formula of full withdrawal in return for comprehensive peace. In our view, as well in the view of many states — primarily Arab states — it is this Syrian position which will achieve a just and comprehensive peace in the region and establish security and stability for all.

[Qabalan] Some people believe that Rabin's assassination upset the balance in the region and certainly changed the concept of terrorism, as viewed by Israel and America. How do you see the difference in dealing with the Israeli leadership as represented by Rabin versus Peres?

[Al-Shar'] I do not want to go back in time. Four years have passed without achieving what we had expected from the peace process. These four years should have been enough. If Israel wanted, a just and comprehensive peace could have been established in the region.

Since Peres took charge of the Israeli government, peace talks were resumed in Maryland, near Washington, in a somewhat optimistic climate. This relative optimism is due to Peres' clarification of some points, in which he stressed that he is willing to go ahead with Syria in the direction of a just and comprehensive peace in the region. This climate of optimism and the statements we heard paved the way for the resumption of peace talks in an atmosphere surrounded by a compelling amount of optimism. We cannot anticipate results. The round of talks that started in Maryland will conclude in a few hours today. Reports circulated so far do not encourage a judgment on the occurrence of tangible results, although the climate that prevailed during the talks calls for comfort, however, there are no tangible results thus far.

We are, therefore, waiting for the end of this round and the arrival in Damascus of Secretary Christopher on the 10th of this month so that he can sum up the outcome of these talks and present to us the U.S. view of how to help the parties achieve tangible progress in the peace process.

[Al-Shinnawi] You said that a change has occurred in Israel with Peres' taking charge of the cabinet. But Mr. Peres is now suggesting withdrawal to the international borders of 1923, rather than those of 4 June 1967. This implies that the Syrians will have to relinquish some 50 km square. What is the Syrian view of that new suggestion?

[Al-Shar'] The Syrian viewpoint is very clear. Withdrawal must be complete. Israel's keeping part of the land, no matter how small, means that it has not withdrawn from the lands it occupied in 1967. In fact, some of Peres' statements reiterate the Syrian viewpoint, particularly when he said that Golan is a Syrian territory. This means that Israel must withdraw to the lines of 4 June 1967. This is the Syrian position in all cases. We will relinquish not an inch of the lands that were occupied on 5 June 1967. [passage omitted]

[Qabalan] Our first telephone call is from brother Muhammad in Sweden. Go ahead Muhammad.

[Correspondent] [Question indistinct]

[Qabalan] The inaudible question was: Israeli Foreign Minister Ehud Baraq has negotiated with Syrian Chief of Staff Hikmat al-Shihabi without any progress to speak of on the security arrangements and other issues. Now Baraq is in charge of the Israeli Foreign Ministry. How do you view his role in this delicate stage of the peace process?

[Al-Shar'] In fact, this question must be put to Israeli Foreign Minister General Baraq. Naturally, we hope that he will act as a foreign minister and a diplomat, will abide by international law, international legality, and the Security Council resolutions, and through his new position will seek the implementation of these resolutions to achieve a just and comprehensive peace in the region, which would put an end to the state of war in the region. Consequently, he — more than anyone else because of his new position — could shift from a state of war to a state of peace and from a state of holding tight to the gun and rifle to that of holding tight to international legality and the Security Council resolutions. This is what we hope in all cases.

[Qabalan] Mr. minister; President al-Asad has proved that patience and a sound reading of history must bear fruit. Are you optimistic about the peace process and should we expect major progress in the coming few months?

[Al-Shar'] His Excellency President Hafiz al-Asad actually possesses several traits. Patience, clear-sightedness, and a analysis of the Arab and international situation are some of them. Most important of all, His Excellency President Hafiz al-Asad has faith in the capabilities and potentials of the Syrian people and the future of the Arab nation. This is what motivates him to hold tight to rights in full and to the restoration of the land in full and to have faith that this land will return. Naturally, it would be better for the land to return through talks than through wars. It would be a mistake for anyone to believe that Syria is negotiating from a position of weakness. We must absolutely not forget that the 1967 defeat was followed by the October liberation war, which shook Israeli society. After that, the Israeli invasion of Lebanon resulted in a major loss for the Israelis. During this invasion, more than 600 soldiers and officers were killed. Syria resisted the Israeli invasion of Lebanon alongside the Lebanese. In any case, Syrians, like any people, incline not toward war but want peace. Obviously, Syria favors peace, particularly a just and honorable peace. It clearly distinguishes between peace and capitulation. It does not accept capitulation in any form, no matter how difficult the circumstances may be. We are optimistic about the future and that a true, just, and comprehensive peace will materialize.

[Qabalan] Thank you Mr. minister. Over now to Muhammad in Washington.

[Al-Shinnawi] We have a call from brother 'Adnan Khalil in Britain. Go ahead brother 'Adnan.

[Khalil] In the past years, Syria has demanded full withdrawal from all Arab territories occupied since 1967, including the West Bank and south Lebanon, to make peace with Israel. What we hear now is that Syria demands full withdrawal from the Golan. The question is: Has the Syrian position changed? The second question is can Syria sign a peace agreement with Israel without Israel's full withdrawal from Hebron, Jerusalem, and south Lebanon?

[Qabalan] Minister Faruq: Did you hear the viewer's question?

[Al-Shar'] Yes, I heard it.

[Qabalan] Have Syria's stances changed and could Syria conclude a peace agreement with Israel without the latter's withdrawal from all the occupied Arab territories according to the Security Council resolutions?

[Al-Shar'] Syria's stance has never changed. Syria insisted and continues to insist on withdrawal from all the Arab lands occupied in 1967, however, the others, or some of the others, have broken away and negotiated for the West Bank, Jerusalem, and the Jordanian territories. Thus, Syria does not wish to be more royal than the king. Although it adhered to and will continue to adhere to the Palestinian people's rights, under the current political atmosphere and in view of the developments that have taken place since the Oslo Agreement, Syria cannot consider the comprehensive peace to be that which existed in the past. This is particularly true since some parties, particularly the leadership of the PLO, insisted on the Oslo Agreement and the agreements that followed in Taba and Washington. Thus, after what has happened, Syria says that comprehensive peace is one that will lead to full withdrawal from the Golan up to the 4 June 1967 line as well as from south Lebanon. This is the Syrian position. [passage omitted]

[Qabalan] We have brother Nawwaf from Kuwait. What is your question?

[Nawwaf] Mr. minister. In light of the peace negotiations between Syria and Israel, there arises the issue of water rights in the occupied Arab territories. Some political analysts have described this issue as a fused bomb between the Arabs and Israel. What is Syria's view on this issue, specially as your basic principle at this stage of negotiations involves Syria' full rights to the occupied territories?

[Al-Shar'] Regarding the water issue, it is one of the issues on the agenda of the multilateral negotiations. In any case, Syria's water rights are known because there are international laws and norms that apply to these rights.

[Qabalan] Mr. minister, Joseph Sisco has said that Syria can now be the peace maker. How do you assess what he said in light of current developments?

[Al-Shar'] I appreciate what Joseph Sisco said about Syria and its role. He was right and, I believe, objective in what he said. Syria realizes this great responsibility and this is why it has been calling for several years for achieving a just and comprehensive peace in the region based on international legitimacy and the UN resolutions. Syria remains committed to peace. The peace process would not have started in Madrid had it not been for Syria. Everyone recalls that former Israeli Prime Minister Shamir refused to go to Madrid but was forced to go when Syria accepted the U.S. initiative. He in fact withdrew from the Madrid conference before it officially ended. Syria is aware of its responsibilities and of the Arab rights which it is defending. It is committed to these rights, has been and continues to be committed to the Palestinian people's rights. I wish to have the opportunity to answer in full the question on comprehensive peace.

[Qabalan] Please go on.

[Al-Shar'] Syria has supported and continues to support the Palestinian people's rights. We differed with others because of these rights and because of our clear commitment to these rights. I say that Syria will continue to defend these rights in all conditions and circumstances and support all the Arabs who demand the recovery of these rights. But I also emphasize, though this emphasis might appear odd being voiced by a Syrian official at this stage, that if the PLO and Jordan as represented by the Jordanian government are really willing to go back to the start of the Madrid conference and to negotiate collectively and on the basis of correct Arab coordination as Syria proposed from the beginning — Syria seriously and truly wanted to achieve a comprehensive and just peace in the region that leads to full withdrawal from all the occupied Arab territories, including Arab Jerusalem, the Golan, the West Bank, and south Lebanon — then Syria is ready to start from where the Madrid conference began, but though some parties have taken responsibility for solving part of this issue, whether in the West Bank or Jordan, Syria still remains committed to the comprehensive peace which it has always called for. [passage omitted]

[Qabalan] We now move on to another phone call from brother Hashim in Sweden. Go ahead brother Hashim.

[Hashim] We would like to ask Minister al-Shar' if there is a political connection between the continued embargo against the Iraqi people and the success of the peace process with Israel? I would like to hear the answer frankly from Mr. Minister.

[Al-Shar'] As far as we are concerned, there is absolutely no connection. On the contrary, we hope there will be no embargo on the fraternal Iraqi people. The peace process is one of restoring Arab rights from the Israeli side. It is absolutely not a process of making concessions to the Israeli side. Peace is a collective demand and not the demand of an individual party. As for the occupied lands, they have to return to their owners.

The embargo that was imposed was the result of the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, which brought this responsibility [as heard] on the Iraqi people when their leadership embarked on that invasion. The invasion led to the imposition of a series of UN Security Council resolutions. These resolutions are still under implementation.

[Qabalan] Then there is absolutely no connection between the two things, however, are there steps toward Arab coordination? We closely followed the Damascus Declaration signatories' support for Syria's position in the peace negotiations. Is there any Arab coordination regarding the peace process and the embargo imposed on Iraq?

[Al-Shar'] Naturally, there is Arab coordination. I can say that this coordination is correct; it is within the acceptable limits. It might have been better. But there is good coordination among the declaration signatories. Since the beginning of Madrid conference, we have hoped coordination would involve all Arab parties involved in the peace process, in addition to Egypt. We met and coordinated. We knew beforehand that this coordination was in our favor and that it did not mean that progress along the different tracks must go in parallel. The goal was to achieve a just and comprehensive peace in the region that does not infringe on Arab rights or leave part of Arab territories under Israeli occupation. This is what we want to achieve.

As regards Iraq, Syria sympathizes with the fraternal Iraqi people, hopes that this blockade will be lifted as soon as possible through the implementation of the Security Council resolutions regarding the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, and also hopes, seeks, and tries not to let external parties or parties in the region get involved in partitioning Iraq or fragmenting its territories. Syria is concerned with, interested in, and careful to keep Iraq's territory and people united.

[Qabalan] Mr. Minister; your remarkable success in foreign policy has made you very close to his excellency the president. How far does he share with you his visions and reading of events?

[Al-Shar'] I share his excellency the president's views and ideas and I try to identify with and honestly express the policy in which he believes. I have known him for a long time, almost 30 years. I have learned much from his excellency President Hafiz al-Asad, because he represents a school. His belief in the just cause of his nation, his constant determination to hold on to rights and international law, and his faith in and optimism about the future have helped me express Syria's policy in a proper manner that is consistent with the policy which President Hafiz al-Asad leads.

[Qabalan] Thank you Mr. Minister. We now move on to colleague Muhammad in Washington. [passage omitted]

Al-Shar' on Maryland Talks, al-Asad

JN0701110196 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 0515 GMT 7 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Syrian Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar' has said that the Israeli withdrawal to the 4 June 1967 lines should be complete. He added that the Syrian stance in this regard has not changed. He expressed optimism over the possibility of achieving a just and comprehensive peace that is based on international legitimacy and the land-for-peace principle.

Interviewed by the British MBC Television last night [as heard], the foreign minister said the atmosphere of the Maryland talks calls for satisfaction, but there have been no tangible results thus far.

Replying to a question, al-Shar' said: President Hafiz al-Asad possesses many traits such as patience, foresight, and the ability to analyze Arab and international developments, in addition to his faith in the potential of the Syrian people. All this motivated him to hold fast to Arab rights and the restoration of Arab land in full, and to have faith that this land will return. Naturally, it would be better for the land to return through talks rather than wars.

He added: President Hafiz al-Asad represents a school. We in Syria have learned a great deal from him. He believes in the just cause of the his nation, and he constantly holds on to rights and international law. It would be a mistake for anyone to think that Syria is negotiating from a position of weakness. He recalled the October liberation war Syria waged in the early seventies, which shook Israeli society, and the subsequent developments, most important of which was the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982 and its losses there, and Syria's support for the brothers in Lebanon at that time.

The minister asserted that Syria seeks a just and honorable peace. It does not at all accept capitulation, which it clearly distinguishes from peace. Syria's positions, he added, have never changed. Syria was and continues to be committed to withdrawal from all Arab territories occupied in 1967. He said: Since the Madrid conference, Syria has suggested the formula of full withdrawal in return for comprehensive peace. In our view, as well as in the view of many states, primarily the Arab states, it is this Syrian position that will achieve a just and comprehensive peace based on international legitimacy, the relevant Security Council resolutions, and the land-for-peace principle, so that security and stability can be guaranteed for all peoples in the region.

Asked about the Syrian view of the Israeli withdrawal from the occupied Golan, al-Shar' said: The Syrian viewpoint is very clear. Withdrawal from the occupied Golan must be complete and must be to the 4 June 1967 lines. Israel's retention of any part of the Golan, no matter how small it is, will mean it has not withdrawn from the land it occupied in 1967.

Asked what Syria expects from Israeli Foreign Minister Ehud Baraq, who led the Israeli delegation to the peace talks in Washington last June, al-Shar' hoped Baraq would act as a foreign minister and a diplomat who abides by international law, international legality, and the Security Council resolutions, and to seek through his new position the implementation of these resolutions to achieve a just and comprehensive peace in the region, which would put an end to the state of war in the region. Consequently, he could shift from a state of war to a state of peace and from a state of holding tight to the gun and rifle to that of holding tight to international legality and the Security Council resolutions.

Asked if the Syrian positions have changed and if Syria will conclude a peace treaty with Israel before withdrawal from all the occupied Arab territories, al-Shar' said Syria's positions have not changed, however, the others, or some of the others, have broken away and negotiated for the West Bank, Jerusalem, and the Jordanian territories. However, under the current political atmosphere and in view of the developments that have taken place since the Oslo agreement, Syria, which adhered to and will continue to adhere to the Palestinian people's rights, cannot consider the comprehensive peace to be that which existed in the past. After all that has happened, we say that a comprehensive peace is the peace that leads to full withdrawal from the Golan to the 4 June 1967 lines and from southern Lebanon.

Regarding the issue of water and Syria's rights to it, the minister said: Water is one of the issues on the agenda of the multilateral negotiations. In any case, Syria's water rights are known, because there are international laws and norms that apply to these rights.

Asked about the Syrian role in regional peacemaking in reference to remarks by Joseph Sisco, former U.S. Assistant Secretary of State, who said Syria can now be the peacemaker, al-Shar' said: Syria has for several years been calling for a just and comprehensive peace in the region based on international legality and UN resolutions. Syria is aware of its responsibilities and of the Arab rights it is defending. It adheres to these rights. It supported and continues to support the Palestinian people's rights. We differed with others because of these rights and because of our clear commitment to these rights.

Al-Shar' added: Syria will continue to defend these rights under all conditions and circumstances. It supports all the Arabs who demand the recovery of these rights. Syria would have been willing, had the others also been willing, to go back to the start of the Madrid conference and negotiate collectively and on the basis of sound Arab coordination, as Syria proposed right from the start for the sake of achieving a comprehensive and just peace in the region that leads to full withdrawal from all the occupied Arab territories, including Arab Jerusalem, the Golan, the West Bank, and southern Lebanon. Now that some parties have assumed the responsibility of resolving part of this issue, whether in the West Bank or Jordan, Syria will continue to adhere to the comprehensive peace which it has always called for.

Asked whether there is a connection between the peace process and the embargo imposed on the Iraqi people, the foreign minister said: As far as we are concerned, there is absolutely no connection. On the contrary, we hope and pray there will be no embargo on the fraternal Iraqi people. The peace process is one of restoring Arab rights from the Israeli side. It is absolutely not a process of making concessions to the Israeli side. Peace is a collective demand and not the demand of an individual party. As for the occupied lands, they have to return to their owners. The embargo was imposed as a result of the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. The Iraqi people have been burdened with this responsibility due to their leadership's action in embarking on that invasion, which led to a series of UN Security Council resolutions which are still being implemented.

On Arab coordination vis-a-vis the peace process and the embargo imposed on the Iraqi people, al-Shar' said: Naturally, there is Arab coordination. I can say that this coordination is within acceptable limits, although it could be better, but there is good coordination among the Damascus Declaration states. As regards Iraq, Syria sympathizes with the fraternal Iraqi people and hopes that this embargo will be lifted as soon as possible through the implementation of the Security Council resolutions regarding the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. Syria also hopes, seeks, and tries not to let external parties or parties in the region get involved in partitioning Iraq or fragmenting its territories. Syria is concerned with, interested in, and careful about keeping Iraq's territory and people united.

Radio: Talks To Reveal If Israel Really Wants Peace

JN0501160596 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1240 GMT 5 Jan 96

[Station commentary]

[FBIS Translated Text] Gentlemen: U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher yesterday attended part of the Syrian-Israeli talks that are currently taking place in Maryland in order to demonstrate the importance Washington attaches to the Syrian track and to comprehensive peace in the Middle East.

Christopher is expected to leave for the region on 10 January to hold talks in Syria and Israel and evaluate the points of agreement and disagreement, and work for overcoming obstacles and bringing positions closer.

All observers agree that the Syrian track is the most important track, because it is the key to comprehensive peace. Progress on the Syrian track will open the way for similar progress on the Lebanese track. Through the Syrian and Lebanese active participation in the peace process, an end can be reached to the Middle East conflict that has been going on for approximately 50 years.

Syria has repeatedly expressed its desire to realize just and solid peace that restores rights to those who are entitled to them. Syria coupled words with deeds when it showed readiness for full peace in return for full Israeli withdrawal. Syria supported the efforts of the U.S. Administration and the international community. The Syrian position is far from complex. It is based entirely on the Security Council resolutions which regulate the peace process. These resolutions are clear and frank. They reject the occupation of others' lands and require Israel to withdraw its forces to the 4 June 1967 borders.

Because Israel uses the pretext of security, Syria agreed to mutual and equal [mutasawiyah] security arrangements although it is known that peace is the absolute guarantee of security and the international community will guarantee any agreement that is reached. For the realization of peace, Syria demanded only that Israel withdraw from the entire occupied Golan so that the people of the Golan, who were evacuated and displaced, can return home and build what the Israelis had destroyed during the long period of occupation. Therefore, comprehensive peace appears to be linked to Israel's sincere response to the basic peace conditions and requirements and its commitment to the principles of international law which do not allow the occupation of others' lands.

Although little has been leaked from the Maryland talks, the first round of these talks was exploratory, and the second round, which will conclude today, is not expected to realize decisive results, however, they can be an indication of the new Israeli policies and whether Israel has a real desire for peace or will continue to use the security pretext to obstruct progress on the Syrian and Lebanese tracks. Syria and Lebanon — and this is a fact known by all —-will not relinquish one iota of their soil and insist on Israel's full withdrawal and full implementation of Security Council resolutions. Without this, it will be difficult for the peace process to make the aspired progress.

What enhances the hope of the possibility of overcoming all difficulties is the U.S. determination to advance the Syrian and Lebanese tracks and realize a real breakthrough [intilaqah] toward comprehensive peace in the Middle East. Comprehensive peace is considered a U.S. and international interest the same as it is an urgent need for the countries of the region.

Syria has responded sincerely and responsibly to the peace efforts as all parties of the international community testify. The coming days and weeks will show whether Israel's response will meet the expectations and aspirations, and whether the Peres government, which showed goodwill, has really risen to the level of the aspired goal of just peace.

Radio: Positive Atmosphere in Talks Not 'Tangible Progress'

JN0601163696 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1235 GMT 6 Jan 96

[Station commentary]

[FBIS Translated Text] None of the observers who were following the long peace march expected a major leap forward in the two rounds of Syrian-Israeli talks, which were concluded in the U.S. state of Maryland yesterday, however, none of these observers had the slightest doubt that a positive atmosphere and a new tone prevailed in the talks. No one failed to notice the U.S. eagerness to impart momentum to the Syrian-Israeli track and its desire to resume the talks, follow up on discussions over substantive issues, explore ideas, and exchange viewpoints as a prelude to a new phase of U.S. efforts to surmount obstacles, bridge gaps, and find basic points to launch practical moves to activate the Syrian-Israeli track and take it to the destination it is hoped to reach if signs of tangible progress emerge.

We have to wait until we see what U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher will bring with him in his tour scheduled to begin soon, before we can assess the future of the next steps. However, the fact that needs to be stressed is that the comfortable and positive atmosphere that prevailed cannot possibly mean that the talks have achieved tangible progress regarding substantive issues, thus enabling us to say that the Israeli obstacles no longer exist and that the road to the aspired peace is clear and unblocked.

This was exactly the concern of the U.S. sponsor. Secretary Christopher's participation in a major part of the talks in Maryland came as an expression of the U.S. Administration's intention to play a more effective role on the one hand, and become more capable of measuring the temperature of the talks, weighing attitudes, monitoring developments, and then moving on to the stage of finding the cure, which requires first and foremost a special effort to persuade Israel to respond to the bases of the peace process and to the spirit of the U.S. initiative itself and to do away with all the conditions and obstacles which are outside the framework of the requirements of real peace and which hamper real progress.

What is required is that the talks should not remain confined to the limits of discussions and exchanging ideas, even though this in itself is important. It would never be right if this were to be the case. There should be a real shift in the Israeli position toward asserting that Israel accepts the peace decision and demonstrates total preparedness to meet its requirements, most prominent among which is full Israeli withdrawal from southern Lebanon and the Golan to the 4 June 1967 lines.

Only such a commitment will make the peace drive leap forward toward achieving real and tangible progress that would make just and comprehensive peace a concrete reality. Thus the entire region will enjoy security and stability and everybody's interests would be served and their dignity would be preserved.

To continue the talks and to arrive at a full understanding, or a practical formula of understanding, there needs to be a solid point from which to proceed. In this case, the solid point is Israel's commitment to full withdrawal, which in turn would lead to all the reciprocal obligations in all areas, particularly security, on the bases of equality [tasawi], equitability [takafu'], reciprocity [tabadul], and parallelism [tawazi], which will secure the needs of the parties concerned on equal basis without leaving any trace or mark of occupation.

Syria, which demonstrates a great deal of response to the peace efforts, demands no more than its territory and its national and pan-Arab rights to secure justice and comprehensiveness for peace. These are the necessary requirements for placing the region at the threshold of real peace. Once Israel commits itself to the peace requirements, peace will prevail in the region, thus ending the age of wars that have exhausted the peoples of the region and of the world.

Potential for 'Substantive Progress' in Talks Seen

JN0701120196 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 0545 GMT 7 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] In its editorial today, AL-BA'TH discusses the Maryland talks. It says that although the two rounds of peace talks on the Syrian-Israeli track in the U.S. State of Maryland achieved nothing substantive or tangible thus far — as Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar' said — the delegations to the talks stressed that the talks were useful and constructive. The paper continues: Maryland's news indicated that the peace talks between Syria and Israel, which took place with effective U.S. participation, achieved nothing substantive. What has been achieved was to a great extent confined to procedural matters and formalities, however, the head of the Israeli delegation said that while there was an understanding, no agreement was reached. Meanwhile, U.S. Special Middle East Coordinator Dennis Ross believes that a good start was made toward laying down a general foundation for progress on the objective and procedural matters required for addressing the main issues, however, he admitted that there were gaps, which he said need continued efforts to be narrowed.

The paper indicates that Walid al-Mu'allim, head of the Syrian delegation, described the talks as serious and useful. He said that each delegation explained in detail its stand on the substantive elements of peace, and that the talks dealt with several issues, led by the Israeli withdrawal from the occupied Golan to 4 June 1967 line, the ordinary peace relations ['alaqat al-silm al-'adiyah], security arrangements, and implementation timetable. He indicated that it is possible to achieve substantive progress on basic issues despite the existence of difficulties and gaps on some essential peace elements.

Concluding, AL-BA'TH says: This shows that it is possible to achieve progress that serves and advances the peace process, however, this obviously depends on the commitment of the concerned parties to the bases and requirements of the establishment of a just, comprehensive peace and the parties' response to those bases and requirements. Since the first moment the peace process began, Syria has been stressing its full commitment to the bases and requirements of the establishment of a just, comprehensive peace.

TISHRIN comments on U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher's expected visit to the region and the ideas that will be subject to discussions and analysis in light of the results of the two rounds of talks over the past two weeks between Syria and Israel in Maryland. The paper views the U.S. secretary's participation in some sessions as an indication of the seriousness of the U.S. commitment to the establishment of a just, comprehensive peace in the region, noting that his expected tour on 10 January is considered a continuation of the U.S. role in the peace process.

TISHRIN says that while statements indicate that the Syrian-Israeli talks were serious and useful and that their results could lead to the achievement of substantive progress on basic issues, the fact remains that there are still difficulties and gaps between the stands of the two sides on some major aspects of peace; however, all concerned parties to the peace process interested in activating and advancing it unanimously agree that Syria is the key to a just, comprehensive peaceful solution, and that the United States is determined to give priority to the Syrian and Lebanese tracks this year.

The paper adds: In his interview with the British television station MBC, Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar' expressed optimism about a just, comprehensive peace based on international legitimacy and the land-for-peace principle. At the same time, he stressed that Syria wants a just, comprehensive peace. Syria will in no way accept any form of capitulation, which Syria distinctly distinguishes from peace. He said that Syria's stands have never changed at all. Syria has insisted and still insists on Israel's withdrawal from all the Arab territories occupied in 1967.

Concluding its editorial, TISHRIN says: The United States has described the beginnings as productive, constructive, and practical. Undoubtedly, in order for this good atmosphere not to be wasted, Israel should fully respond to the conditions and bases specifying the correct and sound path to just and comprehensive peace, led by substantive issues, especially withdrawal, equitable [mutakafi'ah] and parallel [mutawaziyah] security arrangements.

In a commentary, AL-THAWRAH says that while there has been increased positive, constructive U.S. participation in the search for the required progress, this role needs to be activated more and more with every step in search of methods to make tangible progress feasible. This, AL-THAWRAH believes, requires renewed efforts to overcome the difficulties and remove the Israeli obstacles by having Israel respond to the peace requirements, represented by full withdrawal in accordance with the relevant UN Security Council resolutions and the land-for-peace principle.

Concluding its comment, AL-THAWRAH says that in order for the efforts to boost the Syrian-Israeli track onto the phase of genuine progress to succeed, Israel must fully declare its commitment to a full withdrawal so that it will be possible to build on this basis, which paves the way to a just, comprehensive peace and regional security and stability in the interests of the peoples of the region and the world at large.

Radio: Second Round 'More Positive' Than First Round

JN0801152496 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1240 GMT 8 Jan 96

[Station commentary]

[FBIS Translated Text] Gentlemen: There is a consensus that the Syrian-Israeli two rounds of talks, which were held in the U.S. state of Maryland, were positive, but the second round which was partly attended by U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher was more positive and realized some progress in dealing with some issues.

However, it is so far clear that the required essential progress on the most important track continues to face obstacles and loopholes that are difficult to overcome. Undoubtedly, the full withdrawal fro the Golan is the most important issue and is key to dealing with the secondary issues and reaching agreement on them. Furthermore, it is the key to the door of peace that can remain closed and difficult to be open by any other key. This is a fact that no one should ignore and should not be forgotten by any of those who speak about peace with Syria. The road to peace passes through the Golan. As for the roads that circumvent the Golan, they can never — under any circumstances — lead to real peace which eliminates all dangers and feelings of anxiety and insecurity and which creates a healthy atmosphere for coexistence among the peoples of the region. This real peace which opens the horizon for peoples to employ their capabilities and resources in development and construction and to do what is good for them and for the next generations and humanity as a whole.

Anyhow, There is no need to give premature judgment and to predict things after two rounds of talks, which were mainly exploratory of views and trends. It had not been expected to realize miracles in these two rounds, but it was hoped to remove already present obstacles and bridge the gap in the Syrian and Israeli positions. Perhaps, the largest gap is the one that cannot be bridged without Israel's full preparedness and in sincere determination to withdraw from the Golan and every inch of the Syrian territory that was occupied by aggression on 5 June 1967.

It is probably natural not to expect much from two rounds because the nature of the Arab-Israeli conflict and its complications over decades cannot be resolved in two rounds, however, the new language which Israel began to use, and which was unavailable in the past, and what seems to be U.S. determination to participate actively in overcoming the obstacles and advance the peace process to reach its aspired objective raise hope of a real peace in which no one will be done injustice and the rights and dignity of anyone will not be undermined.

It is certain that the return of U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher to the region after his participation in the second round of talks is evidence of the U.S. eagerness to play its full role as an actual partner to translate its initiative, which is based on land for peace, to a reality on the ground.

Israel Urged To 'Rise' to Level of 'Just Peace'

JN0901123296 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 0831 GMT 9 Jan 95

[FBIS Translated Text] The newspaper AL-THAWRAH says that on the eve of U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher's tour of the region, the climate seems to be ready for realizing further positive steps that serve the cause of peace and provide an important and valuable opportunity to realize substantive progress on the Syrian track, which suffered a long period of deadlock and lack of movement. The paper hopes that Christopher's efforts will be successful and that he will attain good results that will help find suitable ground for moving toward laying the foundations of peace.

The newspaper states that Syria welcomes, as always, Christopher's new tour, and regards it as a fresh indication of the seriousness of the U.S. commitment to the effort to establish a just and comprehensive peace in the region. It says: While demonstrating its full readiness for an earnest and fruitful cooperation with all current efforts to push the peace process forward, Syria expects the Israeli side to demonstrate similar readiness and rise, through its positions and decisions, to a level that would render it deserving of peace in the real sense of the word.

The paper says that when Christopher arrives in Damascus, he will realize that Syria adheres to its stand which is committed to the objective requirements of peace, and that it basically demands a just peace and what is rightfully hers in accordance with international legitimate resolutions and charters. AL-THAWRAH adds: As in all his previous tours, Christopher will not face any problems in Damascus. The main problem lies with Tel Aviv, which must prove its peaceful good intentions, translate its words into tangible deeds, and announce without delay its withdrawal from the Golan to the June [1967] borders.

Concluding, AL-THAWRAH says: The ball now is in the court of Israel, which is called upon to develop its positions, making them more than mere statements and proving beyond any doubt that it is prepared to meet its commitment to all the requirements of a just and comprehensive peace.

Israel Urged To 'Make Use' of 'New Atmosphere'

JN0901172996 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1240 GMT 9 Jan 96

[Station commentary]

[FBIS Translated Text] In his meeting with the Norwegian parliamentary delegation, His Excellency President Hafiz al-Asad said that Syria has been supportive of the peace process since the Madrid conference and that Syria adheres to the rules set by this conference. He pointed out that the talks that were held in the United States were conducted in an atmosphere that is better than before. This underscores the Syrian stands which have not wavered since preparations were taken for the peace process to date. These stands are in harmony with the underpinnings of this process, the Security Council resolutions, and the land-for-peace principle.

Syria has always stressed that the realistic positions should translate the good intentions so that it will be possible to talk about the required real progress in the process of a just and comprehensive peace. It is deeds, not words alone, that confirm the credibility of all stands, particularly with respect to the issue of the Israeli commitment to full withdrawal, which will remain the springboard for progress toward full peace.

Today, Israel is required, more than ever, to make use of the current opportunity and new atmosphere, which His Excellency President Hafiz al-Asad described as better than before. This will make it possible to maximize the positive aspects and affix the foundations that will help the talks reach their aspired end, avoiding stumbling blocks or mines. The positive atmosphere should pave the way to a serious discussion of the substantive issues in a manner that will lead to resolving the controversial issues on the basis of the formula of full withdrawal for full peace. When Israel abides by this, then it will be possible to talk about bridging the gap and removing the obstacles, especially if this is coupled with a full acceptance of the security arrangements on the foundations of equality, equitability, and parallelism [tasawi wa takafu' wa tawazi] on both sides of the 4 June 1967 lines.

Crystallizing advanced positions through the extensive U.S. efforts — which were stepped up during the Maryland talks — requires building on the positive atmosphere and moving forward based on a solid groundwork of talks. This groundwork can never be set without a clear Israeli commitment to full withdrawal. The procedural issues, albeit important, are neither peace nor its essence. Peace means removing occupation and aggression. The sole approach to this end is the implementation of the Security Council resolutions.

If the road of negotiations is surrounded by hardships as asserted by all observers, then the Israeli adherence to the principle of full withdrawal will give a great boost to the process of a just and comprehensive peace and make it possible to move quickly toward making this peace applicable. Undoubtedly, Israel, which has long used procrastination under the two former governments, realizes now that the land is the essence of peace. There can be no talk about progress if Syria and Lebanon do not regain their land. Without accepting the principle of equal, equitable, and parallel [mutasawiyah wa mutakafi'ah wa mutawaziyah] peace along the 4 June 1967 lines, there can be no talk about mutual obligations. These mutual obligations are the answer to Israel's demands under the pretext of security, which Syria deems as the result and essence of peace. Syria believes that this security should be equal in every respect.

If this perception of the foundations of peace is materialized, then it will accelerate progress on the basis of full withdrawal in return for full peace. Avoiding any suppositions or predictions, only positive and constructive stands can achieve the required progress in the peace process on the Syrian-Israeli track and, consequently, the Lebanese-Israeli track. Such progress will be made through the force of facts and the will and readiness to make peace, adhere to its foundations, and meet its requirements.

Radio: 'Positiveness' of Maryland Talks 'Not Enough'

JN1001102196 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 0550 GMT 10 Jan 96

[Press review]

[FBIS Translated Text] In a commentary today under the headline "Christopher's Tour and the Aspired Peace," the newspaper AL-BA'TH says: Hopes are pinned on the results of U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher's tour of the region after the U.S. optimism has given clear support for the peace efforts and negotiations on the Syrian-Israeli track.

AL-BA'TH notes: Optimism this time precedes the U.S. visitor after the Maryland talks proved that it is possible to make progress, however, the questions which determine sides and directions will be answered during the meetings which will be held between Christopher and the two negotiating sides.

AL-BA'TH adds: The statements made by some U.S. officials prior to Christopher's tour include assurances that the negotiations will resume and that the peace efforts will be up to the level of the maximum importance of the Middle East peace and stability.

AL-BA'TH stresses: Christopher will find in Syria what he found on previous visits. Commitment to peace is a strategic stand and supporting the peace efforts is in the core of Syria's policy, especially since peace constitutes an objective, and thus, working for this peace is a principled action, however, what the U.S. secretary will find on the Israeli side, is Israel's business. This improved atmosphere provides encouragement not only to the negotiators in Maryland, but to the U.S. cosponsor, who is concerned about showing U.S. credibility toward peace and its conditions.

Concluding its commentary, AL-BA'TH says: The talk about U.S. President Bill Clinton's interest in mediation and taking the initiative is at the heart of the just demand for a full U.S. partnership, and that this partnership be based on the land-for-peace formula which derives its strength from the UN Security Council resolutions and the Madrid conference bases.

On the same subject, the newspaper TISHRIN says: Christopher's tour takes place amid a more optimistic atmosphere than previously, therefore, it is necessary to exploit and invest this positive atmosphere in the interest of making progress and removing obstacles and gaps on the road of the Syrian track in order to achieve a true, just, and comprehensive peace based on the resolutions of international legitimacy and the land-for-peace principle.

TISHRIN highlights President Hafiz al-Asad's remarks that Syria has been with the peace process since the Madrid conference, and that it is committed to the bases of this conference.

TISHRIN adds: Proceeding from this premise, Syria believes that peace is its strategic option. It has also proposed the principle of full withdrawal for full peace, and made efforts to achieve a balanced [mutawazin] and objective [mawdu'i] solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict, and peace which saves the region from woes, catastrophes, and disturbances, in a way that gives each party its rights which should not be at the expense of the other party and its sovereignty over its territory. This is why Syria has rejected the presence of any symbol of occupation on its territory. It also rejects the continuation of the occupation of any part of the Golan.

Concluding, TISHRIN says: The pillars of peace do not need interpretation and explanation as much as they need a will to entrench them. Responsibility for this lies with Israel, taking into consideration that it is the party which occupies our land. So, the termination of occupation is a basic pillar of a just and comprehensive peace. This will automatically be followed by accepting parallel [mutawaziyah], equitable [mutakafi'ah], and equal [mutasawiyah] security arrangements to pave the way for a lasting solution in the region.

In a commentary under the headline "Signs and Requirements," the newspaper AL-THAWRAH says: During a meeting with the Norwegian parliamentary delegation, President Hafiz al-Asad said that the talks which were held in the United States took place in a better atmosphere than before, and stressed that Syria has been with the peace process since the Madrid conference, and that it is committed to the bases of this conference. This is a reiteration of Syria's national and pan-Arab constants which call for the peace of the brave.

AL-THAWRAH says: The positiveness which permeated the Maryland talks is important, but not enough. This is because what is required are positive stands toward the substantial issues so that the gap can be bridged and obstacles surmounted. These obstacles were created by Israel by coming up with ideas that have nothing to do with the essence of peace. It also set impossible conditions which are not acceptable to Syria because they encroach on the principles of full withdrawal and full sovereignty.

Concluding, AL-THAWRAH says: Israel is required, more than at any time before, to prove its good intentions, translate its words into deeds, and to declare its commitment to full withdrawal. This will provide solid grounds for the finalization of stands toward true progress, and pave the way for peace.

'Practical Embodiment' of Positive Atmosphere Urged

JN1001155396 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1230 GMT 10 Jan 96

[Station commentary]

[FBIS Translated Text] Gentlemen: U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher today started a new tour of the region in an attempt to advance the peace process on the Syrian-Israeli track. The U.S. secretary's latest tour follows the Syrian-Israeli talks held in Maryland in an atmosphere that was better than before. This fact adds a touch of optimism to the U.S. efforts and prompts observers to pin more hopes on it.

What strengthens this optimism is the U.S. determination to boost the peace process and achieve a real breakthrough toward a comprehensive peace. This determination was demonstrated in the effective U.S. involvement in the Maryland talks though the personal participation of Secretary Christopher in the talks. Additionally, this optimism draws added strength from the language which Israel has been using since Peres became head of state.

Since the Madrid Peace Conference, Syria has stressed its committment to the peace process and responded favorably to the U.S. efforts over the past four years. Syria also welcomes the current tour by Mr. Christopher, and hopes that these new efforts will convince Israel to abide by the principles and foundations of the Madrid Conference, because this constitutes the only way to the desired peace. The Madrid Conference was based on international legitimacy and its resolutions and on the U.S. initiative. These principles provided a common denominator, on whose basis all the parties accepted and agreed to participate in the conference, therefore, compliance with the fundamental principle, which is the Madrid Conference, and the basis on which it was formed is the pillar for peace.

Peace based on international legitimacy must satisfy everyone. It must not demand that anyone to abandon his rights, nor must it give anyone the right to expropriate others' rights, encroach on their interests, and threaten their security. International legitimacy and the U.S. initiative speak about the withdrawal of the occupation forces to the borderlines that existed before occupation. This means land for peace. Land must be returned in full so that peace can be complete. Any encroachment on either side of the equation means the collapse of that equation, which means the collapse of the peace process as a whole.

Yes, the Maryland talks were held in an atmosphere better than before. This produced a feeling of optimism. The U.S. secretary's tour also comes within an atmosphere of optimism, and coincided with statements that strengthened that feeling, however, what remains is to move from this atmosphere to its practical embodiment. This is possible, but it still hinges on the practical position of the Israeli Government and its ability to confront reality, acknowledge international legitimacy, and implement its resolutions. When Israel does that, peace will become a reality, and its results will be felt by all. A just and comprehensive peace is a guarantee of sovereignty and security. Peace must be strengthened by equal, parallel, and equitable security measures so that it can become a pillar of security, stability, and prosperity.

Syria underlines these facts because it realizes that any fault in the structure of peace will undermine peace, and consequently destroy it, therefore, he who is concerned about the future of the region and wishes to see security, stability, and prosperity prevail must be as keen as Syria is to build the peace of international legitimacy — the just and comprehensive peace that can guarantee the dignity and rights of all parties, and consequently, then can ensure that they will continue to support and protect it.

Press on U.S. Role, Christopher's 'Decisive' Tour

JN1101082396 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 0550 GMT 11 Jan 96

[Press review]

[FBIS Translated Text] In its editorial, AL-BA'TH calls again for invigorating the U.S. role in the peace process on the basis of the agreed-upon principles. This will produce tangible dynamism and reflect on the speed, objectivity, seriousness, and positive atmosphere of the talks.

AL-BA'TH says Syria always looks forward to an active U.S. role in the peace process that exceeds the mission of a mailman or a witness who does not see anything and who does not tell the truth or give his opinion of the stands of the parties and how committed they are to the principles of the peace process and the resolutions of international legitimacy.

AL-BA'TH adds that a great responsibility lies with the U.S. sponsor, who is capable of persuading the Israeli side, if it plans to do that, therefore, the U.S. responsibility is great and is compatible with the status and role of this sponsor on the international scene. This is in addition to its special relationship with the party that is asked to remove the obstacles in the way of the peace talks. The U.S. responsibility is also compatible with this sponsor's ability to persuade this party, in view of the close ties and links between the two sides and the fact that the party in question depends on U.S. financial, political, military, and moral support.

The newspaper concludes: Syria has proven its goodwill at various stages of the talks on the Syrian-Israeli track. Syria shall not abandon its peace strategy. Anyone who truly seeks peace will find a way to agree with Syria. This is what Christopher felt in the past and what he feels today, without there being any retreat, change, or hesitation. The Israeli side should make up its mind and announce a full withdrawal if it wants the good atmosphere to continue and for Christopher's tour to succeed in resuming the talks shortly and giving them a strong push to make real progress and achieve peace in the region.

In its editorial, TISHRIN comments on U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher's tour of the region and his visit today to Syria. In order to bridge the gap regarding major and substantial issues on the Syrian tracks, Christopher should bring to Damascus specific ideas and proposals that would maintain the atmosphere of optimism and hope.

The newspaper says these ideas would strengthen the foundations of peacemaking and ensure the implementation of the resolutions of international legitimacy and setting up parallel [mutawaziyah] and equitable [mutakafi'ah] security arrangements on both sides of the 4 June lines once the occupation ends and Syria regains the Golan.

TISHRIN says the yardstick of achieving a just and comprehensive peace can never be subject to tactical calculations or maneuvers that would waste time and effort. Israel should quickly announce its willingness and actual commitment to the bold decisions that are necessary for the peacemaking process.

TISHRIN concludes: It is high time to translate on the ground what can be characterized as Israeli flexibility. Syria is eager to make the peace process achieve its objectives. The peace-for-peace argument has failed.

In one of its commentaries under the headline "A Decisive Tour," AL-THAWRAH characterizes the tour of the U.S. secretary of state as decisive. Observers agree that the U.S. secretary of state started his new tour amid an atmosphere in which political and media quarters in the Arab world and elsewhere are optimistic.

AL-THAWRAH adds: No doubt, a top priority of U.S. efforts is to bridge the gap between the U.S. and Israeli stands toward substantial issues, which have not yet been settled, especially since Israeli quarters are once again playing the tune of the short time available before the elections in Israel and the United States.

AL-THAWRAH says the U.S. secretary of state's tour will be decisive regarding the fate of the peace process. Israel's ability to prove its goodwill and transform its words into deeds can advance the peace process. Time is running out fast, therefore, Israel must realize that the optimistic atmosphere that was created in a short time can be developed through practical stands that prove its goodwill and put peace on the right track, in line with the foundations of the Madrid conference and the principle of full withdrawal in exchange for full peace. Syria is not the party that is wasting time and obstructing efforts.

The newspaper concludes: The time left before the obligations the Israeli officials are talking about is enough to make peace if Israel adheres to the clear foundations and follows the short path to the aspired goal. Will Israeli actions conform to the ideas that inspired an optimistic atmosphere?

Country Said Pressuring Hizballah To Stop Attacks

TA0901194396 Jerusalem AL-MANAR in Arabic 8 Jan 96 pp 1, 19

[FBIS Translated Text] Consultations between the Syrian and Hizballah leaderships have been launched with an Iranian presence to study the future of Hizballah, which leads the Lebanese resistance against Israel.

Arab sources said that Damascus is demanding that Hizballah halt armed operations and join the Lebanese political landscape. Damascus will guarantee Israel's withdrawal from south Lebanon within one year. Consequently, Hizballah will have no justification to continue military activities. Hizballah would be able to play a role in the political map of Lebanon.

These sources added that Damascus addressed an implicit warning to Hizballah in which it warned against fabricating clashes with Syrian forces in Lebanon.

The same sources said that Tehran is satisfied with the Syrian position and Damascus' pledges. Consequently, Iran will pressure Hizballah to halt its armed operations.

U.S. and Israeli circles acknowledge that Syria alone can stop armed operations against Israel which are launched by radical Lebanese and Palestinian organizations. Consequently, these circles believe that Damascus is the safety valve in the northern region and is able to curb these organizations and will try to induce them to practice political action only. Therefore, as the sources say, the radical organizations, especially the Palestinians, are currently looking for places outside Syria and Lebanon in which to settle. The chances for finding such places are slim. Consequently, these organizations will witness splits and desertion by elements operating under their banners.

Afghanistan

Russia Said To Plan Reopening Embassy in Kabul

LD0501155796 (Clandestine) Radio Message of Freedom in Pashto to Afghanistan 0730 GMT 5 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Quoting a reliable source, a correspondent of the Radio Message of Freedom reports from Kabul that Moscow is planning to open its embassy in Kabul in the near future.

Our correspondent reports that the Kabul coalition administration and Moscow have reached complete understanding, on the basis of which Russia will reopen its embassy in Kabul. Foreign embassies in Kabul are being closed due to security problems. However, the Kabul coalition administration has extended the hand of friendship to this major enemy of Afghans and thus wants to use Russia to kill more Afghans. The opening of the embassy and espionage agency of Russia in Kabul demonstrates this fact.

India

'Renegade' Guerrillas Search for Kidnapped Tourists

BK0801064996 Hong Kong AFP in English 0643 GMT 8 Jan 96

[By Surinder Oberoi]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Hakura, India, Jan 8 (AFP) — Dozens of well-armed guerrillas from a renegade Muslim militant group have fanned out in southern Kashmir to search for four Western tourists kidnapped six months ago.

An AFP correspondent who visited this village in southern Kashmir where the hostages and their kidnappers were sighted on December 23 encountered members of the Muslim Mujahedeen engaged in a search for the captives.

The Muslim Mujahedeen has been accused by other Muslim separatist groups of siding with the Indian security forces battling the insurgency in Kashmir which has left more than 12,000 people dead since 1989.

"We have received information that the abducted foreigners... are in the surroundings of these villages and we are here to rescue them," Firdost Ahmed, a leader of Muslim Mujahedeen, told AFP here over the weekend.

Muslim Mujahedeen guerrillas were seen setting up roadblocks in Hakura, 75 kilometers (46 miles) south of the Kashmir summer capital Srinagar, and the village of Badasgam. They stopped cars and asked the occupants if they had sighted the hostages.

Other members of the group were seen conducting a search of the area in their private vehicles.

Ahmed said the members of his group were also on the lookout for members of a rival militant group, the Hizbul Mujahedeen.

The Muslim Mujahedeen is bitterly opposed to fundamentalist militant groups such as the Hizbul Mujahedeen and there have been several clashes between the organizations.

"We have left militancy and are now working for the national cause," Ahmed said. "Our first aim is to kill militants of Hizbul Mujahedeen."

The Indian authorities have repeatedly ruled out staging a commando-style operation to rescue the hostages — two Britons, an American and a German — saying it would be too risky.

Britons Paul Wells, 23, and Keith Mangan, 33, and American Donald Hutchings, 42, were kidnapped by the shadowy Muslim extremist group Al-Faran on July 4 while trekking in the Kashmir Himalayas.

German Dirk Hasert was seized on July 8, the same day as Norwegian Hans-Christian Ostro, who was killed by the kidnappers in August.

Al-Faran has claimed recently that it was no longer holding the hostages and said they had been rescued by the Indian army in a December 4 clash.

The army insists that the four are still in the hands of Al-Faran and has dismissed the claim as propaganda.

Al-Faran has demanded the release of 15 imprisoned Muslim militants in exchange for the four hostages but has not been in contact with the Indian authorities since November 26.

Mharashtra Government Revives Enron Power Project

BK0801145596 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1230 GMT 8 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Maharashtra cabinet has decided to revive the controversial Enron power project. The chief minister, Mr. Manohar Joshi, announced this at a news conference in Bombay this evening. He said about 25,000 crore rupees will be saved in the next 20 years because of changed conditions imposed by the state government. These include reduction in the power tariff from 2 rupees 40 paise per unit to 1 rupee 86 paise after completion of both phases. The capital cost will be reduced from 4 crore 3 lakh rupees per megawatt to 2 crore 62 lakh rupees. The company will have to reduce the total capital cost for both phases by 2,636 crore rupees. Mr. Joshi said the saving in foreign exchange will be to the tune of 25,000 crore rupees, as this amount will now be paid in Indian currency. The government also expects the company to give 30 percent equity of the project to the Maharashtra State Electricity Board.

Answering a question, the chief minister said that he is hopeful that the Enron Company will accept the terms and conditions put forward by the Shiv Sena-BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] coalition government. Mr. Joshi emphasized that no compensation will be given to the company for the delay in the implementation of the project.

Enron Asked To Withdraw Arbitration Cases

BK1101025096 Delhi Doordarshan Television Network in English 1530 GMT 10 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Maharashtra government has asked the U.S. multinational power company, Enron, to withdraw the arbitration cases against the state government. Talking to reporters in Aurangabad today, the deputy chief minister, Mr. Gopinath Munde, said the Enron must withdraw the pending arbitration cases as the state government has cleared the company's power project at Dabhol. He said the government will not pay any compensation to Enron.

Congress-I, CPI-M React To Enron Decision

BK0901161996 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1530 GMT 9 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Maharashtra chief minister, Mr. Manohar Joshi, has said that his government's decision to revive the Enron power project is final. He told newsmen that the decision clears the doubts about any jeopardy to foreign investment in the country and especially in Maharashtra. Earlier, Mr. Joshi called on the prime minister. He, however, denied having discussed the Enron issue with Mr. Narasimha Rao.

The Congress-I has said that the Maharashtra government should have approved the Enron power project much earlier, instead of wasting one full year. The party spokesman, Major Ved Prakash, said the Manohar Joshi government wanted to politicize the issue. In its reaction, the Communist of Party of India-Marxist said the Maharashtra government has betrayed the people by announcing the revival of the project.

Spokesman Denies Canadian Pressure on Nuclear Test

BK0801132296 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1230 GMT 8 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] New Delhi has dismissed as baseless a report that India has bowed to Canadian pressure on the nuclear issue. The report, which appeared in a national daily, said that Canada had sought and obtained assurance from New Delhi that there will be no second nuclear test at the Pokaran site as a precondition for the Canadian prime minister's visit to India [beginning 9 January]. An External Affairs Ministry spokesman said there is no truth in the report.

Seven Soldiers Killed in Kashmir; Strike Continues

BK0501134196 Hong Kong AFP in English 1026 GMT 5 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Srinagar, India, Jan 5 (AFP) — Seven Indian soldiers and eight Moslem militants, seven of them foreigners, were killed in a sudden upsurge of violence in strife- torn Kashmir, authorities said Friday.

Fourteen soldiers were also injured in fierce gunbattles and by land mines in the Kashmir Valley, which remained crippled for the second day running by a strike called by Moslem separatists.

Four army men and two militants, including one foreigner, were killed during a 20-hour gunbattle in the Gandherbal hills overlooking Srinagar, summer capital of the no@thern Indian state of Kashmir, officials said.

The firefight, which ended late Thursday, erupted when a group of Islamic mercenaries ambushed an army convoy, police said. Seven soldiers were injured, three of them seriously.

An army major and six foreign mercenaries were also killed late Thursday in a separate 12-hour gunbattle on the outskirts of Srinagar after the troops launched a combing operation, the police sources said.

A land mine planted by Moslem guerrillas blew up an army truck in the southern Kashmir district of Phulwama overnight, killing two soldiers and injuring seven.

Hundreds of mercenaries from such Islamic countries such as Afghanistan and Pakistan are fighting alongside Kashmiri militants in a bid to secede the state from the Indian union.

Indian officials say most of the recent fighting in Kashmir is being done by the foreign mercenaries, many of whom are known to be Afghan war veterans. Most local militant groups are said to be in disarray.

The spurt in violence came as the Kashmir Valley was paralysed Friday in response to a strike called by Moslem separatists to urge the United Nations to hold a plebiscite in the strife-torn Indian state.

Government offices, shops, businesses, banks, post offices, courts, and schools were closed in Srinagar and throughout the valley, police sources and residents said.

Srinagar's streets were mostly deserted, and civilian vehicles were off the roads across the Moslem-majority region, the sources said. Heavily-armed Indian troops patrolled this city of 800,000 people.

Friday's shutdown was sponsored by the Islamic Resistance Front, an umbrella grouping of four Moslem militant groups which want the disputed Himalayan territory to merge with Pakistan.

A UN resolution on Kashmir passed on January 5, 1949 called on India to hold a referendum in the state, whose Hindu ruler chose the previous year to join the newly-independent Indian union.

The four rebel groups accused the world body of failing to put pressure on New Delhi to implement the resolution, while the chief Moslem priest of Kashmir accused the UN of double standards.

"The UN has failed to give practical shape (to the resolution) despite the fact that it will only help in bringing peace to India and Pakistan," said the priest, Moulvi Umar Farooq.

"The UN resolution is the only acceptable solution to the Kashmir problem, " added Asiya Andrabi, who heads Dukhtaran-i-Milat, a militant women's group.

The Kashmir Valley was crippled by a similar strike Thursday to denounce attacks on separatist leaders allegedly sponsored by the Indian government. New Delhi directly governs Kashmir.

More than 12,000 people have been killed by official count in Kashmir, India's only Moslem-majority state, in a bloody separatist drive since 1989.

India accuses Pakistan of arming and training the militants. Islamabad denies the charge but gives diplomatic support to what it describes as a legitimate campaign for self-determination.

Top Kashmiri Rebel Leader Said Killed in Raid

*BK0801130296 Hong Kong AFP in English
1245 GMT 8 Jan 96*

[FBIS Transcribed Text] SRINAGAR, India, Jan 8 (AFP) — Indian security forces on Monday shot dead a top Kashmiri Muslim separatist leader whose group claimed responsibility for a bombing in the Indian capital last week, police said here.

Sajjad Kinoo, the founder of the Jammu and Kashmir Islamic Front (JKIF), was shot dead by members of the crack Special Task Force during a raid on his hide-out in the outskirts of Srinagar, the state summer capital, police said.

"We raided the place in the afternoon after receiving a tip-off," an official said.

The JKIF had claimed responsibility for Wednesday's bombing in Sadar Bazar, New Delhi's bustling commercial district, in which seven people were killed and 35 injured.

The attack came less than two months after another blast claimed by the JKIF in Connaught Place, New Delhi's fashionable downtown business district which left 22 people injured.

The JKIF was formed by Kinoo about six months ago, shortly after his escape from prison on charges linked to the 1990 abduction and murder of Mushir ul-Haq, the vice chancellor of Kashmir university.

Kinoo had vowed to stage attacks outside Kashmir, India's only Muslim-majority province, where a bloody separatist campaign has claimed more than 12,000 lives since 1989.

Kinoo, a former member of the Ikhwan-ul-Muslimoon separatist group, was also wanted in connection with the 1991 kidnapping of Nahida Soz, the daughter of a well-known Kashmiri lawmaker, who was released unharmed after seven days.

The rebel leader was once shown on videotape sitting next to "Tiger" Menon, one of the chief suspects in the March 1993 serial blasts in India's commercial capital Bombay which killed more than 300 people.

Ten Injured in Bomb Blast in Srinagar

*BK0601161396 Delhi All India Radio Network
in English 1530 GMT 6 Jan 96*

[FBIS Transcribed Text] In Jammu and Kashmir, 15 persons belonging to a minority community were killed by unidentified militants in Barshala, about 37 km from Doda. The incident took place last night when a group of masked militants entered the village and set on fire two government buildings. The villagers protested the burning down of the same and tried to capture the militants. The gunmen opened fire indiscriminately, killing at least 15 persons on the spot. The governor, General Krishna Rao, has strongly condemned the dastardly act of killing innocent persons. In Doda District, shops and business establishments belonging to all communities remained closed today as a mark of protest against the killings. More details are awaited.

Meanwhile, in Srinagar, 10 persons were injured in a blast in a hotel near the General Post Office this afternoon. The hotel building caught fire immediately after the blast.

Rao Announces Elections Set for April

BK0601160996 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1530 GMT 6 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The prime minister has reiterated that the Lok Sabha elections will be held in April this year. Speaking to newsmen at Bairagarh airport in Bhopal before leaving for New Delhi, Mr. Narasimha Rao said the dates for the polls have, however, not been decided.

Replying to a question, he said there are no differences between the Center and the Election Commission over the dates. Asked if another session of Parliament will be held before the elections, the prime minister pointed out that vote on account has to be taken.

Earlier, addressing a public meeting at Joteswar, Mr. Narasimha Rao announced that the Center is considering a massive program for setting up industrial units in the country, which thrive in a pollution-free environment. The government is selecting industries for this purpose. The prime minister emphasized that peace and stability is very essential for the economic progress of the country.

Mr. Rao referred to the 30,000-crore-rupee central scheme for poverty alleviation and pointed out that some states are using the funds earmarked for it for their own programs. He said this is not a healthy practice. The prime minister said the Center has now decided to give funds for development directly to the panchayats [village councils] which should ensure that they are not misused.

Iran

Five Sentenced to Death for Spying for U.S., Iraq

LD0601172796 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in English 1530 GMT 6 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Five Iranians, who have been convicted of spying for the interests of the U.S. Government and the Iraqi Ba'thist regime, were sentenced to death today on the verdict of the Islamic Revolutionary Court. Three of those convicted were accused of spying against the Islamic Republic of Iran for the interests of the U.S. Administration through direct contact with agents from the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency, undergoing various courses, dispatching required reports and information through writing invisible letters and recruiting individuals to spy for the CIA.

The two others were convicted of being part of an assailant group designed to take action against the Islamic Republic of Iran's system, involvement in armed operations and espionage for the interests of the Iraqi Ba'thist regime.

Majles Approves Allocation To Counter U.S. Moves

LD1101104796 Tehran IRNA in English 1029 GMT 11 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Jan. 11, IRNA — In order to defuse and uncover U.S. plots against the Islamic Republic of Iran, Majles committee in charge of reviewing the 1375 budget has allocated rls. [rials] 25 billion, said a member of the committee, Hassan Qashqavi, to the English [language] daily, 'TEHRAN TIMES' Thursday.

In an interview Qashqavi told the paper that it is the right of the Islamic Republic to allocate a considerable budget to defend its territories and dignity.

Qashqavi termed the recent U.S. Congressional bill on anti-Iran operations as illegal, saying that it will receive negative reactions from the international community.

The Majles had to earmark the rls. 25-million budget and at the same time has to take the necessary diplomatic and security measures to enlighten the world and demonstrate Iran's determination to ward off U.S. aggression.

Majles speaker, Hojjat ol-Eslam 'Ali Akbar Nateq-Nuri earlier this month urged members of the parliament to allocate a considerable budget to reciprocate U.S. action.

Syria Warned of Same Fate as Anwar al-Sadat

NC0701110296 Tehran ABRAR in Persian 30 Dec 95 p 1

[Editorial: "Damascus' Ungratefulness"]

[FBIS Translated Text] In their final communique yesterday after the Damascus session, the foreign ministers of the six Persian Gulf shaykhdoms plus Syria and Egypt, supported the territorial claims by the United Arab Emirates [UAE] against Iran.

The Damascus session communique coincides with the end of first phase of "peace talks" between Syria and the Zionist regime on a farm in Maryland. These talks have Tel Aviv's approval.

Syria is now abjectly seeking peace. Its representatives even have dinner with the Zionist delegation. Damascus intends to alter its regional diplomacy. It seems that this shift also means forgetting old friends—friends who assisted Damascus during the 80's when Syria was isolated in the Middle East, and who even provided it with the fuel it needed.

At that time—after the signing of the Camp David peace agreement between Anwar al-Sadat and Menachem Begin—Syria faced a situation of standing alone against the reactionary Arab regimes. And it was only by virtue of the assistance from the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Islamic movements in the Middle East, especially the Lebanese Hizballah, that it was able to maintain its position. This was at a time when Iraq—Syria's traditional enemy—was involved in a war with Islamic Iran, and this allowed Syria to have peace of mind regarding its western borders.

In the midst of all this, the Persian Gulf war was an opportunity Damascus exploited very well. By supporting the regional objectives of America and its allies, Syria paved the way for their return to the Middle East. And the reward received from the shaykhdoms was Syria's membership in the Six-Plus-Two Pact—a pact that envisages a regional role for Damascus.

Since then, changes in Syria's stands have gradually become visible; in parallel with its participation in compromise talks with the Zionist regime, Syria is preparing to play a role in the Middle East after the establishment of peace.

Now that the compromise deal between Damascus and Tel Aviv is expected to be signed before the U.S. presidential elections, it seems that Syria has accepted Washington's and Zionism's regional policy of denigrating the Arabs and the Islamist process led by Iran. Egyptian author Hasanayn Haykal does not justify this policy. He says: "Is it logical for the Arabs to be hostile to Iran and at the same time give in to the Zionist regime's demands?

News reports indicate that Damascus is in a hurry to make peace with the Zionist regime. Apparently the Syrian officials have forgotten the experiences of several Arab countries in the Middle East. Despite the treachery of their leaders, the Egyptian, Jordanian, and Palestinian peoples continue to oppose the Zionists and oppose their existence in the Middle East. In addition, the bomb explosion in Riyadh showed what dependence on foreigners brings. If the Damascus statesmen ignore it, they will share the same fate as Anwar al-Sadat, the former dictator of Egypt.

Vice President Calls For Security in Persian Gulf

LD0501193396 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1630 GMT 5 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] First Vice President Hasan Habibi who has travelled to the province of Hormozgan in order to open several development projects and to meet the local people there, this afternoon attended a welcoming and spirited gathering of the Muslim people of the town of Abu Musa at the town's Shahid Takhti Stadium. [passage omitted]

He told the meeting: You, the Muslim people of Abu Musa, represent the 60 million people of Islamic Iran as well as all the fighters and warriors of this territory. You are the steadfast border guards who are guarding the borders of this Islamic country in the most southern sector of the country.

He emphasized the importance of islands, particularly those in the Persian Gulf, and said: Because we are all flag bearers of the Islamic revolution and the pure Muhammadan Islam we must defend every inch of our motherland in order to maintain the security of the Persian Gulf and to establish better security in the region.

Habibi emphasized that Islamic Iran had an important share of the responsibility in establishing stability, security and tranquillity in the Persian Gulf.

He said: Global arrogance, led by the United States, would not turn away from any plot against our country and it therefore seeks to disturb the peace in the region.

He said: The enemy will lose heart as the power of the Islamic Republic becomes more evident in the world.

Habibi pointed to the presence of the people of Abu Musa, particularly the women of the Islamic community, and called on them to be patient in the face of difficulties.

He said government officials must try harder every day to bring about the cultural and economic welfare and progress of the Abu Musa Island. [passage omitted]

Velayati Congratulates New Russian Foreign Minister

LD1001221996 Tehran IRNA in English 2156 GMT 10 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Moscow, Jan. 10, IRNA — Iran's Foreign Minister 'Ali Akbar Velayati on Wednesday [10 January] congratulated the new foreign minister of Russia, Yevgeniy Primakov upon his taking office.

In his message to Primakov, Velayati expressed hope that his appointment would help dramatically broaden the present relations between the two countries both at the regional and international levels.

He also said that the people and government of Iran were ready to help further relations between the two countries.

Ayatollah Gives Sermon on U.S. 'Treachery'

LD0601192196 Tehran IRIB Television First Program Network in Persian 1603 GMT 6 Jan 96

[Second Friday prayer sermon by Ayatollah Ebrahim Amini, member of the Assembly of Experts, in Qom on 5 January — recorded]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [passage omitted] There is a new U.S. plot to allocate a huge budget in the U.S. House of Representatives to fight the Islamic Government of Iran, or in their own words, for covert operations to support terrorists inside the country and overthrow the Islamic government. This is their new plot.

Of course, we all know that there is nothing new in this design. Since the victory of our revolution, the United States has been mobilizing all its powers to overthrow our government. They had this on their mind from the very beginning. We have not forgotten the first economic sanctions and the coups that were thwarted in Tabas and other places. You know better yourself. There was the imposed war, during which the United States did everything against us and forced other rulers to oppose us. It has been continuing since. You know about the more recent economic sanctions. During the past 16 or 17 years, the United States has done and spent whatever it could. Now they have agreed to allocate $20 million for overthrowing the Iranian Government. They have spent hundreds of millions of dollars toward this end. Now, what is this posture about overthrowing the Iranian Government with $20 million? Despite all these plots they have failed so far, and no doubt they will fail again. [crowd chants in approval]

Such U.S. actions and movements will only result in more disgrace for themselves and the greater unity of our people, as well as the mobilization of international public opinion in our defense. Our people have put up with so many difficulties, including the imposed war, which was the worst. Now, so what that they have allocated $20 million? I do not really understand this foolish act. What is the aim? They know and the world knows that nothing will come of it.

However, we have a problem with the United Nations and other organizations that, in their own words, defend human rights. You claim to defend human rights but how is it that you are keeping silent about this U.S. act of treachery? Interference of one country in the affairs of another is banned by international declarations. The United States has also committed itself through the Algiers Declaration not to interfere, directly or indirectly, in the internal affairs of Iran. It is now clearly stating that it is allocating money for covert operations, terrorism, and terrorists. Is this not terrorism? Why are they keeping silent? What is up with this world? There is no hope with them. We expect Islamic countries to take some steps. Of course, some countries have made some moves. But we expect Islamic countries to be more careful because the opposition is not to Iran, it is to Islam. Muslims understand this and the United States will be defeated, God willing.

There is another issue. This is about the unfriendly stance taken by the leaders of Arab countries who issued the Damascus Declaration. These countries gathered in Damascus to solve their own problems. At the end of the meeting they issued a repetitive statement of no content about the three Iranian islands. Iran has ruled the three islands for hundreds of years. Everyone, the world, the Muslims, and these very countries know this. Why do they make such statements and repeat statements that have no content? Why do they do this? We should complain. It would be better if they did not behave like this. They should not be fooled by the United States. The United States does not want to look after your interests or our interests. The United States wants to use you to create divisions between regional countries toward its own ends. You should not be fooled. You should not commit acts of treachery against your own people. Instead of publishing such baseless statements, you should call for unity among the people of the region. You should create unity among people. Unity and steadfastness will maintain regional security. The United States and other countries are unable to maintain this. You should not behave like this. You should not commit acts of treachery against your own people. Iran is not your enemy. [passage omitted]

Khamene'i Criticizes U.S. Actions in Speech

LD0701141196 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1101 GMT 7 Jan 96

[Speech by Ayatollah 'Ali Hoseyni Khamene'i, leader of the Islamic revolution, on the occasion of Mahdi's birthday; place and date not given — recorded]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] In the name of God, the compassionate, the merciful. [passage omitted]

Before the victory of the revolution the enemy utilized all means to make the people lose any hope of victory. They used to ask if it was possible [to carry out such a revolution]. Will a nation with empty hands, they used to ask, be victorious against a regime that is armed to the teeth? That is never possible. They used to propagate that hopelessness among the people endlessly. The people did not lose hope. [passage omitted]

After the victory of the revolution, also, the enemies of this nation sang songs of despair, saying: You will not succeed, it is not possible to manage [the country], one cannot confront America, one cannot resist the material world, there is no use, we must give up, we must accept. Whenever there was a victory, they tried to cover it up and to distort it in their global broadcasts and media. Whenever there was the slightest setback, they turned that molehill into a mountain; saying: It is no use anymore. All that was to make people lose hope. But the people did not despair. They went through the war, they went through the post-war period, they passed the reconstruction period. With God's blessing, the people have worked hard. Their hope has redoubled because they see progress. Look where the nation was at the beginning of the revolution and where it is now! [passage omitted]

It is quite clear that they cannot divest this nation of its hope. Now the enemy has stooped to scandalous acts. That is the reason for the American political apparatus lurching and wondering what to do in the face of the Iranian nation. That is why they embark on ill-considered moves against the Iranian Government and nation; it is because of your power. [crowd chants: "Death to America," "Death to America"] It is because of the power of this nation, because of the hopefulness of this nation, because of the determination of this nation that the enemy has no idea what it should do in the face of this nation. It embarks on idiotic acts.

What is being done by the American men of power and American politicians — whether it is the president or others who embark on those acts and make those remarks — is against themselves. The world judges that is against themselves. That a government should so disgrace itself in the world by approving a budget for undercover operations in another country! Do you think that the world thinkers, the world statesmen, the educated human beings in the world do not understand what an obscene and disgraceful act that is? Obviously those efforts will be unsuccessful.

From the first day of the revolution, they allocated a budget, spent money. They did not specify anything. They did not write it anywhere — that they were working against the Islamic Republic. The bombings, the support for the hypocrites [reference to the Mojahedin-e Khalq Organization], all of this was funded by these same people.

How successful have they been so far? It will be the same again now. Of course, they are unsuccessful. There is no doubt about that. However, that they should display their disgrace to this extent in the full view of international public opinion, that they should approve this in the form of a parliamentary measure — this is God's mark of injustice branded on their foreheads. Others will understand this. Wise people understand this. They themselves do not understand it.

The U.S. regime thinks that, by approving a sum — it makes no difference whether it is $20 million, $200 million, or $2 billion — it thought that, by approving a sum to carry out sabotage in the great and proud country of Iran, in Islamic Iran, it could isolate Iran. It has isolated itself without realizing it or knowing it. [crowd chants approval]

They thought that international public opinion would not understand how shameful and base their action is. They may realize this now. Now that international public opinion has condemned this action and will continue to condemn it even more with every passing day, they may understand and regret what they have done. They may wish to do something to wipe out the memories of their action. Do they think we will allow this? Do they think we will allow this U.S. shamelessness to be forgotten? All the world, all future generations must know that the shamelessness of the American regime reached such a point at one time that it set aside and approved a budget for sabotage against a free government and a powerful nation.

This is the ugliest and most contemptible action that can be carried out by a government in the course of international relations. American officials believe that the world will surrender to their dictatorship. What a mistake! What a costly mistake it will turn out to be for them.

Of course, they are busy with their elections now, drunk with their election campaigns and far removed from usual human principles. They do not understand what they are doing. When the dust has settled a bit, they will realize what a stupid thing they have done.

They think the world will surrender to them. What a mistake! The nations of the world, in every corner — many nations — have united, have endured difficulties and deprivation. A nation united [pauses] — nations crushed the tyranny within their countries. Look how, 50 years ago, 60 years ago, 100 years ago, many countries had dictatorial regimes ruling over them. The nations resisted, struggled. [passage omitted]

Will nations that did not tolerate tyranny at home tolerate it from the United States? What a stupid idea! What a mistake! It may be that a weak government, without character and detached from its own nation, will surrender to the bullying of the United States, the threats and interferences. Nations will not surrender. Governments that have strength of character will not surrender either. Governments that have good relations with their own nations will not surrender to U.S. bullying; not in Europe, not in Asia, not in Africa. If the nation is like the brave and resistant Iranian nation, if it has been through battlefields, had so many martyrs, crossed oceans of blood, had men and women who fought like lions in battlefields — if a nation is like this, were the United States to put one foot forward, this nation would slap it so hard in the face that there would be nothing left of it. [crowd chants approval] [passage omitted]

Pakistan

Bhutto Warns India Against Testing Nuclear Device

LD0601102896 London THE DAILY TELEGRAPH in English 6 Jan 96 p12

[Article by Ahmed Rashid in Lahore: "Bhutto warns India over bomb test"]

[FBIS Transcribed Excerpt] Benazir Bhutto has warned India that if it tests a nuclear device, Pakistan might follow suit.

On the eve of a visit to Japan, Pakistan's Prime Minister urged the West to restrain New Delhi or risk tragedy in the Indian subcontinent and damage to global non-proliferation policies.

"We hope the day will never arise when we have to use our knowledge to make and detonate a [nuclear] device and export our technology," she said. "India must be restrained if the subcontinent is to be saved."

Washington believes that Pakistan has not yet sold nuclear technology to any of its neighbours, but Iran is eager to acquire it.

Ms Bhutto's remarks follow American press reports quoting US intelligence sources that India is about to test a nuclear device.

India denies this but Western and Pakistani diplomats say there is unusual activity going on at Pokaran, in Rajasthan, where India tested a nuclear device in 1974.

Now India might want to test a small device to fit to its Prithvi short-range missile, which would pose a threat to Pakistan.

Ms Bhutto said any Indian nuclear test would "trigger a proliferation race".

Indian and Pakistan deny that they have nuclear weapons, although Western intelligence believes they have.

Western diplomats fear the consequences of a nuclear testing free-for-all. One said that it would "destroy the delicate ambiguity that each country maintains about its nuclear programme, but which has kept the nuclear peace in the subcontinent". [passage omitted]

Afghans Arrested for Bomb Explosion in Peshawar

LD1001150396 (Clandestine) Radio Message of Freedom in Pashto to Afghanistan 0730 GMT 10 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Last night the Peshawar police arrested more Afghans in connection with the bomb explosion in the city. Newspapers have also reported that five people have been arrested. These Afghans have been arrested in connection with the explosion in Sadar Bazaar and taken to [word indistinct] for investigation.

The five Afghans by the names of 'Ali Rahman, Wakil, Sadeq, Nabi, and Harun, who have been previously arrested by the police for investigation, yesterday denied the charges of committing the crime before a judge at a Peshawar court and categorically said that they were innocent and detained for no reason.

Opposition Leader Unhurt in Attack on Convoy

BK1001035296 Hong Kong AFP in English 0339 GMT 10 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Islamabad, Jan 10 (AFP) — Armed men attacked a convoy carrying Pakistani opposition leader Nawaz Sharif in southern Sindh province, wounding around 30 people, but Sharif was unhurt, reports said Wednesday.

The attack took place Tuesday [9 January] while Sharif and members of his Pakistan Muslim League were travelling to a political meeting in Hala, opposition sources said.

The attackers also used iron bars and bamboo poles to damage Sharif's vehicle.

The Muslim League accused Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto and her husband, Asif Zardari, who is a political power in the province, of being behind what it termed an "assassination attempt."

Sharif, 45, was prime minister from 1990 to 1993 and became head of the conservative opposition after Bhutto's victory in 1993 elections.

Further on Attack

BK1001064296 Islamabad THE NATION in English 10 Jan 96 pp 1, 11

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Hyderabad — The convoy of the Leader of the Opposition, PML (N) [Pakistan Muslim League (Nawaz)] chief and former Prime Minister

Miah Muhammad Nawaz Sharif was attacked on the National Highway Hala on Tuesday by armed miscreants in which 30 PML leaders and workers including former Sindh Minister Ismail Rahu received serious injuries but Nawaz Sharif miraculously escaped unhurt. The windowpanes of quite a few vehicles were smashed.

According to reports, Milan Mohammad Nawaz sharif with PML (N) Sindh President Syed Ghous Ali Shah, Tehmina Daultana MNA [Member of the National Assembly], Ismail Rahu, Shah Mohammad Shah and others had gone to Hala to inaugurate the PML office.

After inaugurating the office, PML (N) chief addressed the people gathered on the occasion. Nawaz Sharif was on his way to the shrine of Shah Abdul Latif Bhitai after the inauguration ceremony.

When the motorcade of PML (N) leaders reached National Highway, a group of people fired on it, pelted stones, bricks, lathis and rotten eggs. As a result of indiscriminate firing, the windscreen of Mian Nawaz Sharif's vehicle was smashed. Nawaz Sharif who was sitting on the front seat luckily escaped unhurt.

During this attack about a dozen of persons including former Sindh Minister Ismali Rahu, PML(N) District South Karachi President Saeed and Ms Sultana Ibrahim of women Wing received injuries while eight vehicles were damaged.

According to PML(N) sources PML (N) Sindh Coordination Secretary and incharge of Sanghar by-election, Mumtaz Ali Rindh was also kidnapped during the incident.

Later, Nawaz Sharif drove to Bhitt Shah and offered fateha at the shrine of Shah Abdul Latif Bhittai and then flew back to Islamabad from Hyderabad Airport.

Meanwhile, addressing a hurriedly called Press conference here on Tuesday evening at the Hyderabad Press Club, President Pakistan Muslim League Sindh, Ghous Ali Shah, condemned the attack on the Leaderof the Opposition and said that this attack reflects PPP [Pakistan People's Party] culture. "What sort of democracy is this where a former Prime Minister was attacked, "He said.

He claimed that the PPP is losing by-election in Sanghar and therefore,

Speaking on the occasion Tehmina Daultana MNA said that it is her first tour of interior Sindh and she did not expect such a welcome, but added that unfortunately, it is the political culture of PPP.

PPI adds: Leader of the Opposition Nawaz Sharif has said that the present government is security risk for the integrity and solidarity of the country.

Addressing a public meeting on Tuesday here in connection with by election or PML candidate Haji Islam Qureshi from NA-181, Sanghar- II, he urged people to support PML to oust present corrupt government and said 1996 is the year of mid-term polls.

He charged that Benazir Bhutto and her husband were allegedly plundering the national economy. He alleged that Benazir was humiliating the country at international level by begging for foreign aid.

About price hike he recalled that in his tenure ghee was Rs 19 per kg and now it stands at Rs 40 per kg. Likewise, prices of essential commodities like rice, potato, tomato were being increased and imported from India.

He said these policies of the present government became security risk for the integrity of the country. He said in view of such circumstance, people had to support PML and as soon as we come into power, we will initiate the process of accountability against the present rulers.

He charged that innocent citizens were being killed allegedly at the behest of Prime Minister and interior minister.

Sharif said that he had concrete evidence that government agencies were involved in double murder of innocent Arif and Nasir, brother and nephew of Altaf Hussain, chief of MQM [Muhajir Qaumi Movement]. He maintained that present rulers, who described Altaf Hussain as terrorist, were the greatest terrorists of this age.

He said PML and MQM offered government to seek solution of Karachi problem jointly, but prime minister ruled out this offer and rejected even discourse initiated between government-MQM. He termed the present government as main obstruction in restoration of lasting tranquility in Karachi. If the present government was removed peace would be restored in Karachi within 24 hours, he claimed.

He said Benazir Bhutto wanted to create differences among Sindhis and Muhajirs using Sindh card, but people of Sindh by supporting PML rejected her Sindh card. He maintained: "I will use Pakistan card, and the people of the country will support PML as they are sincere Pakistanis.

He urged the people of NA-181 constituency to vote for PML(N) candidate, Islam Qureshi. Syed Ghous Ali Shah, President of PML Sindh, Shah Ahmed Shah, Senator Ishtiaq Azher of MQM, and Begum Mumtaz Quereshi, president PML women wing, Karachi division, also addressed the meeting.

'At Least 6' Killed in Karachi Bomb Explosion

BK0701162196 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in English 1600 GMT 7 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] In Karachi, a bomb exploded in a passenger bus resulting in the killing of at least 6 persons and causing injuries to 35; out of them 25 are stated to be in a serious condition. The Karachi Transport Corporation bus was going to Malir in East District from Sadar area when the bomb kept in it exploded near the nursery. Ambulances of V.D. Trust took out the bodies from the bus, and the injured were shifted to hospitals. Investigations have been taken in hand.

Leaders Condemn Blast

BK0801040396 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in Urdu 0200 GMT 8 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Sindh governor and the chief minister have strongly condemned the bomb blast in a passenger bus in Karachi last night, saying that the provincial government will make every possible effort to take to task those responsible for the killing of the poor people. On hearing the news of the blast, Governor Kamaluddin Azfar rushed to the Jinnah Postgraduate Medical Center to see the injured persons; he offered a blood donation to help the victims and sympathized with them. He said those responsible for this crime do not deserve to be called human beings, because they are playing with the lives of innocent people. The governor said a group of terrorists is engaged in such acts and had carried out such activities in the past as well. They do not want peace in the city and are committing terrorist acts to destabilize the government and the country.

Condemning the bomb blast, Chief Minister Syed Abdullah Shah said that elements who want to spread chaos and disturb peace in the country, especially in Karachi, are behind the blast, which claimed at least seven lives and caused injuries to more than 35 others. The chief minister immediately reached the Jinnah hospital and ordered proper treatment for the injured people. He gave an assurance that the persons responsible for the blast would not go unpunished. He directed the administration to conduct a thorough inquiry and apprehend the culprits. The district magistrate of the South District has appointed an inquiry officer to gather information about the culprits. The chief minister announced that compensation would be paid to the victims of the blast. The bomb explosion has also been condemned by Senior Sindh Minister Syed Parvez Ali Shah, Federal Minister for Food and Agriculture Nawab Mohammad Yusuf Talpur, and Professor Ghafoor Ahmad, the deputy chief of the Jamaat-i-Islami.

A press note issued by the deputy inspector general of police, Karachi, last night said in all 11 people were killed and 25 others injured in terrorism-related incidents in different parts of the city yesterday. They include seven people killed in the bomb blast in the bus.

Leaders, Iran Agree To Cooperate for Afghan Peace

BK1001143996 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in English 1400 GMT 10 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Iranian foreign minister, Dr. 'Ali Akbar Velayati, has held detailed talks with president Farooq Ahmad Khan Leghari, Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto, and Foreign Minister Sardar Asif Ahmad Ali in Islamabad during his two-day visit on important issues, including Kashmir and Afghanistan.

During the talks, the two countries agreed to support the efforts to bring fighting in Afghanistan to an end and to work for peaceful solution acceptable to all Afghan parties. The two countries also agreed to extend full cooperation to any solution agreed upon by the Afghan leaders and people reflecting the ethnic and demographic realities in Afghanistan.

Pakistan and Iran also agreed to continue high-level contacts to promote process of peace and reconciliation in Afghanistan. The Iranian foreign minister informed Pakistani leaders about the contacts made by them with various leaders of Afghanistan. During his talks, a review was made of the implementation of bilateral agreement on purchase of bulldozers from Iran in exchange for the sale of cement and sugar plants from Pakistan. Other projects, including the proposed the oil refinery and the award of road construction contract in Pakistan, were also discussed. A delegation from Iran would soon be visiting Pakistan to discuss further the project for the supply of Iranian gas to Pakistan with particular reference to pricing policies to be followed.

The president during a meeting told the Iranian foreign minister that Pakistan wants stability in Afghanistan and in the region and it is working for an early peaceful settlement of the Kashmir problem in accordance with the UN Security Council resolutions. He said this will lead to tremendous economic activities in the region which will benefit all countries, including Iran, Pakistan, Afghanistan, India, the Central Asian Republics, and even the Russian Federation.

Dr. Velayati also called on the prime minister and apprised her about his talks with Pakistani officials. Dr. Velayati described his talks with the president, the prime minister, and other Pakistani leaders as satisfactory. He said Iran and Pakistan have decided to cooperate with each other in bringing peace to Afghanistan.

About Kashmir, he expressed the hope that this question would be resolved soon according to the aspirations of the Kashmiri people. The Iranian foreign minister said they also decided to have bilateral talks on reducing tariff on trade. He also reviewed cooperation under ECO [Economic Cooperation Organization] and said Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto had desired to expedite cooperation in the establishment of ECO airlines.

UK Home Secretary on Altaf Hussain Extradition

BK0801162396 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in Urdu 1500 GMT 8 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] British Home Secretary Michael Howard said that he held extremely fruitful talks with Pakistani leaders. Addressing a news conference in Islamabad today after meeting with the prime minister, he said both that the countries will closely cooperate in dealing with the narcotics menace, as it is an international problem and no single country can control it. Michael Howard said that the steps taken by Pakistan to prevent the smuggling of narcotics are quite encouraging. He said most of the narcotics are being produced in Afghanistan, but a major portion of them are being smuggled to other countries. To eliminate this situation, the narcotics control task force will be given more assistance. Michael Howard said he also held talks with Pakistani leaders on emigrants and the problem of terrorism.

In response to a question as to whether the United Kingdom will consider Islamabad's request to extradite Muhajir Qaumi Movement leader Altaf Hussain to Pakistan, he said currently there is no treaty between the two countries to swap criminals and in this connection, there is no scope for any ad hoc arrangement on the basis of certain factors. For this purpose, he said, Pakistan should refer to the Commonwealth Secretariat. Replying to another question, he said if there is satisfactory evidence to prove that someone is involved in acts of terrorism or abets terrorism, the UK would take action to hand him over to the respective country.

Bhutto Says Power Sharing Formula With MQM Possible

BK1001133096 Islamabad PTV Television Network in English 1300 GMT 10 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto has said a power-sharing formula could be worked out with the [Muhajir Qaumi Movement — MQM] Altaf Group only if it dissociates itself from slogans against the integrity of Pakistan and the politics of gun running.

Talking to newsmen in Gujrat today, she vowed that the government will not surrender before terrorism as the integrity and solidarity of the country is dear to us. She said with the introduction of development package and other measures, the situation has considerably improved in Karachi. The people of Karachi are no more frightened and are cooperating with the government to eliminate terrorism. She said New Delhi is recruiting mercenaries from Bangladesh and India for terrorist activities in Karachi as they are finding it difficult to get collaborators from the city.

Referring to the reported agreement between Altaf Hussain and Nawaz Sharif, the prime minister maintained that by encouraging Altaf Hussain, Nawaz Sharif has tried to retard the process of peaceful solution of the Karachi situation. She said the collaboration between Altaf and Nawaz aims at destabilizing the government, but they cannot succeed as the people of Pakistan want development and stability.

Azad Kashmir Refugee Camps Training Fighters Denied

BK0701122896 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in English 1100 GMT 7 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Azad Jammu and Kashmir prime minister, Sardar Abdul Qayyum Khan, has said India, which created Bangladesh terrorism, is responsible for abetting terrorism in Karachi through trained subversive activities. In an appearance on an Indian TV program, he refuted allegation of imparting training or arms supply to Kashmiri freedom fighters. He said there are camps in Azad Kashmir, but these are refugee camps and not training camps.

Sardar Mohammad Abdul Qayyum Khan said they desire solution of Kashmir issue through peaceful political process, but under the prevailing situation, those who resort to arms struggle have no other choice.

Officer Held in Coup Case Said Tortured

BK0901102296 Islamabad THE NATION in English 9 Jan 96 p 15

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Defence Counsel of Maj-Gen Zahirul Islam Abbasi, Mr Justice (Retd) K.M. Samdani has said that the Abbasi has been tortured and held illegally.

He said this while talking to BBC on Monday night. Gen Abbasi, the main character in abortive coup case, is to appear before a court martial with three other officers on Wednesday (tomorrow). Defence lawyer Samdani said there is specific protection against torture in the Constitution. The torture of whatever kind especially physical torture is unconstitutional. Every citizen of Pakistan has the right to be protected against torture under the Constitution, he added.

He further said that Maj-Gen Abbasi is still in custody. He said the Major-General is not being held according to the Constitution and legal guidelines.

When BBC asked whether he was making any application to the court to try and resolve these matters to his satisfaction, Hamdani said the Abbasi has already applied to the court.

Officer's Wife Denies Reports

BK0901121996 Islamabad THE NEWS in English 9 Jan 96 p 12

[Report by Shakil Shaikh]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Islamabad: The wife of a key military officer allegedly involved in the abortive coup plot, Major General Zaheerul Islam Abbasi, denied Monday the statement issued by a legal firm that "he is being meted out extremely inhuman and abusive treatment during investigations."

Mrs. Abbasi, an English-speaking religious woman, told this to THE NEWS on telephone.

She said "I have not authorized anybody to issue such statements on behalf of my husband, now facing trial before the Field General Court Martial."

She added, "The press should seek my approval before carrying any statement relating to my husband," currently lodged in the Attock Fort.

Karachi Police Arrest 'Notorious Terrorist'

BK0901032396 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in English 0300 GMT 9 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] In Karachi District West, police yesterday arrested a notorious terrorist, Rashid alias Negro, and recovered a semiautomatic 7-mm rifle from his possession. He was wanted in more than a dozen cases of murder, attempt to murder, dacoity [robbery], arsoning of vehicles, and damaging of government property.

'India-Trained Terrorists' Arrested in Karachi

BK1101111896 Islamabad THE NATION in English 11 Jan 96 p 1,13

[APP report]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Karachi—A CIA [Crime Investigation Agency] team Tuesday night arrested three India-trained terrorists and recovered two hand-grenades, two Kalashnikovs and one T.T pistol from them.

According to CIA, during patrolling at Rizvia Chowk, Gulbahar, Sub-Inspector Ghulam Subhani intercepted a suspected black coloured Honda Civic (Z-3016) carrying three young men identified as Mohammed Siddiq, who was driving the car, Mohammed Haroon Chitta and Rasool Bux alias Bhoora.

On search the CIA party recovered a Kalashnikov, loaded magazine and 20 rounds from Mohammed Siddiq, two hand-grenades, one Kalashnikov [KK], loaded magazine and 22 rounds from Haroon Chitta and a 30-bore T.T pistol from Rasool Bux alias Bhoora.

The accused had snatched one KK from a cop in Thatta after killing him. CIA said the accused had snatched the car from the jurisdiction of Tipu Sultan Police Station.

They have admitted committed a number of dacoities and cases of kidnapping.

Langra recruits budding terrorists

Javed Langra, Pakistan's most wanted terrorist visited Bangladesh recently to recruit batches of young Biharis for training in India prior to their launching into Pakistan for terrorist activities.

Highly-responsible sources told this to APP that Javed Langra travelled to Dhaka from West Bengal (India), under the cover name of Muhammad Farooq. It is believed that Javed Langra's visit was sponsored by RAW [Research and Analysis Wing], the Indian Intelligence Agency, with the motive that in case of arrest of these terrorists, the blame will not come on India.

During his stay in Bangladesh, Javed Langra visited various Bihari camps at different places, delivered speeches to motivate young Biharis against Pakistan and enlisted them for terrorist training in India, on lucrative terms.

The main theme of his speeches was: forefathers of Muhajirs had committed a blunder by waging a struggle for Pakistan. They gave a lot of sacrifices to create Pakistan where now Muhajirs were being annihilated.

Sri Lanka

LTTE Bomber Sets Off 'Powerful Explosion'

BK0801100396 Hong Kong AFP in English 0956 GMT 8 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] COLOMBO, Jan 8 (AFP) — A Tamil Tiger guerrillas suicide bomber set off a powerful explosion in eastern Sri Lanka Monday, wounding seven people, including a police constable, officials said.

The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) bomber activated explosives strapped to his chest but failed to cause a major destruction at the busy market in Batticaloa, officials said.

"He was obviously trying to target civilians and cause panic," said a local official in Batticaloa, 300 kilometres (187 miles) east of here.

Officials said the LTTE had stepped up its activities in the east following the fall of their main stronghold of Jaffna in the north of the country to security forces last month.

Nearly 50 people, including security personnel have died in a new wave of violence in the vast eastern province since the New Year.

Suicide bombers known as "Black Tigers" have been used in several assassinations as well as attacks against security force camps and navy craft across the island's north as well as in the capital Colombo.

Police have said that at least 30 suicide bombers had infiltrated Colombo and already a handful of photographs of suspected Black Tigers have been released with offers of rewards for their arrest.

The LTTE is leading a protracted campaign for an independent homeland in the island's northern and eastern regions where the two million Tamil minority is concentrated.

More than 50,000 people have died in bitter fighting in the past 23 years.

Foreign Minister on War Against LTTE

BK0801091496 Bangkok BANGKOK POST in English 8 Jan 96 p 5

[Report on interview with Foreign Minister Lakshman Kadirgamer by Edward Thangarajah on 5 January; place not given]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The 10,000-strong Tamil Tiger rebel force is resisting efforts to squash them by Sri Lankan government forces despite being outnumbered 10 to one.

Some 380,000 refugees are living a stone's throw from their homes in tents and in difficult circumstances, but aren't returning home for fear they could be targeted for attack and harm by the rebels.

The Sri Lankan government is feeding them but the rebels are snatching part of the food in an effort, some believe, to continue their guerrilla warfare and reign of terror after the heavy losses they suffered during the recent overrunning of their stronghold, Jaffna, by government forces.

Sri Lankan Foreign Minister Lakshman Kadirgamar told BANGKOK POST last Friday the situation was now fluid but under control as far as the Sri Lankan government is concerned. It believes only time will settle this confusing state of affairs in the 17-million-strong island republic.

There are strong signs of calm and peace emerging since the capture of Jaffna after the long guerrilla campaign which enveloped the country, killing nearly 50,000 people, according to Mr Kadirgamar.

He says the rebels no longer receive support from other countries. In particular India, which financed the guerrilla effort and trained and armed the fighters during the mid '80s, is no longer giving support.

"In fact they (India) have asked for the extradition of rebel leader Velupillai Prabhakaran and the request is being processed by the Sri Lankan government. There's no reason the request will be refused as the two are friendly nations," said Mr Kadirgamar.

"But how are we going to apprehend him?"

The Sri Lankan government, he said, has offered a reward of 25 million rupees (US$600,000) and it could be doubled.

"We want to get him desperately. If that happens it would be the end of terrorism, massacres, murder and misguidance by the rebels.

"We know he is in the jungles ready to make nuisance strikes against the country and stall peace efforts. We are also aware, through his assistants, that he is misleading young boys and girls.

"Even 10-year-olds aren't being spared. They are being enlisted either through coercion or seduction. Tiger recruits have a habit of glamourising war and poisoning the minds of the young, who are gullible. Being innocent, they can fall easy prey to such imprudent heroism.

"This is the biggest crime and misfortune which has befallen this young generation. They have been seen carrying cyanide capsules round their necks and a German scribe visiting the North recently saw them using the capsules like toys.

"Their numbers could be several hundred, perhaps thousands — one generation of boys and girls perhaps. When the dead were counted after a recent battle, it was heartbreaking to see among those slain the bodies of so many boys and girls.

"We have evidence to show they were used in nightly attacks on villages and they had killed many children of their own age, even babies. We were shocked when we received information about these atrocities.

"Once peace is established and rehabilitation takes place we are going to face a tough psychological situation. Transforming the minds and thoughts of these youngsters so they can adopt peaceful, progressive ways of life will be a Herculean task.

"Though international law prohibits children under 15 years of age from being recruited into the armed forces, and there's pressure in many places to raise the age limit to 18 because the young cannot understand the dangers and implications of war, its consequences and threat to life, the Tigers don't care.

"Having suffered severe losses in the recent battle, they have recouped their forces with these innocent boys and girls.

"When peace comes, the debris of war will be devastating. Because the minds of these youngsters have been twisted, convoluted and maimed, they will need mental and psychological rehabilitation.

"This is one of many unforgivable sins the LTTE [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam] rebels have committed during their so-called battle to create a separatist state, which will never happen."

Mr Kadirgamar said the next six months will be crucial in reaching a permanent settlement.

He believes the onus of seeking peace will be on the Tamils themselves, and those who have been forced by the rebels to quit their homes and suffer this sad plight.

Mr Kadirgamar believes it will take time because it will mean the rebels' last hurrah and the end of their domination over poor, innocent people whom they are holding hostage.

"It has to come slowly, but I don't see the people suffering for long. Who wants to renounce the happiness of living in spacious homes which are their own for living nearby in tents.

"No one in their proper sense would make such a sacrifice even if they support the rebels, which we know isn't true.

"To the common man in the north of Sri Lanka, a separatist state doesn't make sense. They are aware that the rebels are fighting in vain because their plans to establish Eelam (a state of their own) cannot work."

Mr Kadirgamar believes the rebels are now frustrated and their pipeline for arms via the sea, has been narrowed since tie army capture of their stronghold.

He predicted there is bound to be dissension because rebel leader Prabhakaran isn't liked by many and he eliminates those who stand up to him or are a threat to his position. The rebels have admitted to the killing of his lieutenant, Mahattaya, not so long ago.

"Therefore, a coup within their ranks cannot be ruled out because he has made too many enemies and is fearful of survival in the open. It is impossible for him to come into mainstream democratic politics."

The foreign minister believes even those contributing funds to purchase arms, mainly expatriate Sri Lankans living in Scandinavia, France, Canada and Britain, will withdraw support as it will be difficult to get weapons through once the seas are well patrolled.

"Those contributing funds due to implied, indirect coercion will automatically stop helping, while others who enjoy comfortable happy lives and have been mercilessly financing the war will also withdraw support once they know fully well that the cry for Eelam is ridiculous and it will never happen."

Mr Kadirgamar said the military process of bringing about peace and stability in the north and east of Sri Lanka is only the beginning of President Chandrika Kumaratunga's efforts to find a long-lasting solution to the ethnic problems which have caused tremendous hardship, stalled progress and retarded the country's development by many decades.

On the political front, he said very important developments are going to take place. A peace package will be presented in legislative form this month to the Parliament Select Committee for discussion.

"To enforce it we need a two-third majority, which we don't have. We need the support of the opposition which has all this time been saying it wants the draft tabled. Now they will face the moment of decision; they cannot dillydally any longer.

"The minority communities are watching them closely. If they don't cooperate, naturally they will lose minority support and will face adverse consequences at the next polls.

"We are hopeful they will support the draft. Thereafter it will go before a national referendum where a simple majority will be needed to amend the constitution. When that happens, there will be a massive devolution of power from the centre to the regions, including the troubled north and east.

"It will be a major constitutional reform. It will be interesting to see what the LTTE will do then. My feeling is that the LTTE will be marginalised. The other minority parties are already in favour.

"The next six months are vital for Sri Lanka. We don't want to go on spending 25 percent of our budget on fighting a war against rebels. This is a colossal loss of money which should be spent on development and essentials.

"The battle against terrorism this year will cost several million dollars. We need to free the east as well and settle the displaced people. We need to bring law and order, civilisation and rehabilitation.

"The people of the north have been living without electricity for over five years. They have been moving in the dark physically and psychologically. There's been no development whatsoever. All the rebels have done is plant the whole region with booby traps mines and other destructive installations.

"The Sri Lankan Army is in the process of clearing them to enable the people of the north to move about safely and live without fear. It will take time but we are in the process of reaching our goals. But what we need most is cooperation and understanding from the people who are now living under rebel threat."

LTTE Said To Join With Indian Tamil Separatists

BK0601122196 Colombo Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation International Service in English 1045 GMT 6 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Reports from Madras speak of the LTTE [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam] joining hands with the Tamil Nadu's Dravida Kazhagam [name as heard — DK] to form a separate state for Tamils. A news dispatch from Madras received by LANKAPUVATH said that the DK is to launch a campaign of terror in Tamil Nadu to capture power and break away from the Indian Government. At the same time, the LTTE plans to have northern and eastern Sri Lanka separated from the island to form a greater Tamil state.

LTTE leader Prabhakaran, in a letter addressed to political leaders of southern India a few days ago, quoted the DK leader K. Veeramani as saying that the LTTE's fight for a separate state in Sri Lanka was an inspiration for Tamils in Tamil Nadu to agitate for a state of their own. Meanwhile, LTTE spokesman Anton Balasingham in a statement in London has admitted widespread criticism of the Tiger leaders from the Tamils for breaking the peace with the government. He said that these critics have blamed the LTTE for the current plight of the people of Jaffna.

Tamil Political Parties Unite To Present Joint Stand

BK0801133096 Colombo DAILY NEWS in English 8 Jan 96

[Received via Internet]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] TAMIL political parties are now busy working out their basic position which they will place before the Parliamentary Select Committee on Constitutional Reform. The government is expected to submit the legal draft of its devolution proposals very soon.

Four former armed groups — PLOTE [People's Liberation Organization of Tamil Eelam], EPRLF [Eelam People's Revolutionary Liberation Front], TELO [Tamil Eelam Liberation Organization], and EROS [Eelam Revolutionary Organization of Students] — which returned to the political mainstream following the Indo-Sri Lanka Accord of 1987 are doing the initial spadework.

"We have met a few times and have reached a common position. We will talk with the others so that we can place a joint Tamil position," said EPRLF secretary-general Suresh Premachandran.

The consensus that has emerged revolves round the 4-point formula the Tamil parties placed before the Mangala Moonesinghe Committee, plus three more demands.

The four points to which all Tamil parties subscribed two years ago were:

—a merged north-east province;

—full autonomy;

—a Muslim Unit within the merged north-eastern province;

—Sinhalese in the North-east to enjoy rights similar to that given to the Tamils and Muslims living outside that province.

The three additional demands are: Secular state; citizenship for all who live in Sri Lanka continuously for 10 years and the alteration of the phrase 'union of regions' now found in the government's proposals to 'union of states.'

"We will request that the word 'states' be substituted for the word 'regions' to ensure that a truly federal arrangement comes into being," Mr. Premachandran said.

The EPRLF will now talk to the TULF [Tamil United Liberation Front] and EPDP [Eelam People's Democratic Party] to draw them into the common arrangement.

CWC [Ceylon Workers Congress] and Upcountry People's Front have indicated their support for working out a common Tamil position.

Chief Ministers Challenge Dissolution of Councils

BK0901095696 Colombo LANKAPUVATH in English 0845 GMT 9 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Colombo, 9 Jan (LANKAPUVATH) — The chief ministers of the two provincial councils which were dissolved last week have filed papers in the court of appeal challenging the dissolution of the councils by the respective governors as violations of the constitution and illegal.

Mr. G.D. Mahindasoma, chief minister for the North Central Province [NCP] and Mr. R. Jayatilleke Podinilame, chief minister for Sabaragamuwa, are seeking writs of certiorari quashing the orders of the respective governors dissolving the two councils, declarations that the dissolutions are null and void and an order on the elections commissioner prohibiting him from holding elections and an interim order restraining him from calling for nominations as it would make the final determination of the applications hugatory [as received]. The petitions of the two chief ministers filed through Samararatne Associates have been settled [as received] by Mr. K.N. Choksy PC [President's Counsel], Mr. Daya Pelpowa, Mr. D.H.N. Jayamaha and Mr. Lakshman Perera.

Mr. Mahindasoma has cited NCP governor Maitripala Senanayake and HE [His Excellency] Mr. Dayananda Dissanayake, commissioner of elections, as respondents.

Mr. Jayatilleke Podinilame has cited Mr. C.N. Saliya Mathew, governor, Sabaragamuwa Province and the commissioner of elections as respondents.

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